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THIS WORLD OF OURS

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J. H. CURLE



# THIS WORLD OF OURS

BY  
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NEW  YORK  
GEORGE H. DORAN COMPANY

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PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

APR -1 1921

©Cl. A611491

no 1



243 9 Apr. 1921

*Out of the golden remote wild west where  
the sea without shore is,  
Full of the sunset, and sad, if at all,  
with the fulness of joy,  
As a wind sets in with the autumn that  
blows from the region of stories,  
Blows with a perfume of songs and of  
memories beloved as a boy. . . .*

—HESPERIA



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THIS WORLD OF OURS





# THIS WORLD OF OURS

## CHAPTER I

### THE WORLD MY OYSTER

I HAVE only one life: then I am liable to be a long time dead. But before I die there is this beautiful World to see.

If Francis Bacon could take all knowledge for his province, why mightn't I, a boy, try to take this Round World of Ours for mine? . . . And I did. I dedicated myself to travel. I travelled so far, so wide, that perhaps no one has caught me up. But the quality of my wanderings—which only I can judge of—that is a different thing. It is so easy to travel to-day—mostwheres; and I have travelled too easily. As I lay in bed once, computing my achievements, a voice cried in the dark—"You miserable Cook's tourist! What do you imagine *you've* done? Remember the French jeweller, Tavernier, setting out those centuries ago! And Marco Polo, reaching China in the Middle Ages! Think, too, with your *wagons-lits* and your thermos flasks of Thomas Coryat, walking from Jerusalem to Ajmere at a cost of fifty shillings! Go to sleep."

I did. Yet, however humbled my pride, I *have* seen the Face of the Earth. I am getting far, far more than my share out of life; what can I give the World, for all the World is giving me?

Once in Australia, a bed-ridden man lay reading a book. It was my *Shadow-Show*; and he said to me, "I wish he would write another."

That at least I can do; here it is. A small enough thing; yet if it give pleasure to some weary ones, let that be placed against my great debt.

Travel was in my bones. I belonged, through my mother, to the Pinsons, English descendants, to all seeming, of the Pinzons of Spain. Living at the Port of Palos, beside Huelva, Alonzo, Vicente and Francisco, three brothers of this family, not only financed Columbus as to one-eighth but sailed with him to the discovery of America; and to Vicente Pinzon, some years later, fell the actual discovery of Brazil. Of the "Old Admiral" himself, who made so many things possible for me, I shall have enough to say.

*Conquistadores* in the blood; an early instinct which told me I should sit at no desk—these counted for something; yet my destiny was shaped for me otherwise. I was fourteen, with overstrung nerves and a weak digestion; and after thoughts of a public school had been put aside—what was there for it? Accompanied by a guardian, I set sail around the Cape for Australia.

We saw no land. Our canvas was furled seventy-seven days later, off Wollongong, where a tug boat took us in tow, and that night we passed through Sydney Heads. Awaiting a berth in the dock, we dropped anchor in a cove on the north shore of the harbour.

In these days, Sydney must needs find room for 750,000 people, but in those days that cove lay utterly secluded, wooded to the water's edge. All was green and sparkling, lobelia and maidenhair fern grew in each crevice; landing on that first Sunday morning I roamed the woods enchanted.

In the evening I escorted three of our ladies over the water to church. In the gloaming we landed before a city where all the houses and superscriptions seemed Chinese, presently passing into crowded streets, and the British town, where there was a cathedral, and splendid singing; but my thoughts lay in those woods over on the "North Shore."

Retracing our steps to the boat, we passed the stall of a huckstress, where I would have refreshed myself; but it was conveyed to me that one of the ladies belonged to some stringent sect, and could not bear to see apples bought on the Sabbath. I had fingered the fruit, and already held it in a bag; nevertheless, my first deliberately ethical act in Australia was to replace those apples on the stall and the sum of threepence in my trousers pocket.

The following day we berthed; upon which my guardian conducted me to an hostelry in the heart of Sydney, hastened to celebrate, and by evening lay speechless drunk upon his bed. He had been selected from eighty applicants. Waking next morning as fresh as ever, he surprised me by hurrying us aboard a small harbour steamer, crowded with merry-makers. Producing two tickets for the day's outing, he became the life and soul of the party, putting a furious zest into "kiss-in-the-ring" with the more buxom among the women. That evening, in the hotel, he lay drunk again, and passed insensibly, wide eyed and stertorous, to a state bordering on delirium. A few days later this person was delivered to his relatives, and from then onward I travelled alone.

Physically, as one may say, I was launched, and in prudence, in certain Scottish traits of character, already a grown man. But you are not to suppose that Australia, or any other land, is going to reveal the inner mysteries to a boy of fourteen. I was still stolid and unimaginative; there must have been days, even in the

"bush," when a black coat and a desk hung over me as by a hair. But the sense of "atmosphere," which stands for the subtler side of things, was forming slowly, and a breath coming out of the East, nearly a year later, made my ultimate calling and election sure.

On the homeward voyage from Australia, on a night, the steamer was to skirt the shores of Ceylon. There had been great heat, and I lay asleep that night on deck. And as I slept, I dreamed: dreamed of the happy Australian hunting-grounds, of kangaroos ridden down, of emus despatched, and of the white cockatoos which screech and circle in mid-air. And I dreamed we were already to the East. There were palm trees, and deserts; and bagpipes were playing at the relief of Lucknow. Then I woke to strange cries, and in the silvery moonlight two fishermen were clinging to their *catamaran*, which the great steamer had brushed from her path. Ere the little tumult had died in our wake, my eyes were straining at a shadow I knew for the coast, and I gulped down the spice-laden air.

There came a grey light after a while, and all along the coast a fringe of palms. Above the palm trees I saw the forests. As the daylight waxed, I saw these spread over upland and mountain. They rose up to Adam's Peak itself, where the rainclouds were already formed, and as I watched they became marvellously fresh and green. It was the dawn in Ceylon; the East had become mine for evermore.

Down that palm-fringed coast winds a railway. Passing out of Colombo, trailing its smoke neath a green canopy, the train runs beside the shore, where the surf comes breaking, and cocoanuts fall thudding on the sands. There are cocoanut palms for eighty miles, and the train goes winding among them, between the hills and the sea.

In these seashore woods, in their small houses, live

the Cingalese proprietors, with a beast or two, the nuts, and a covered bullock cart for their gathering—a happy people. And beside them, along these shores, live many, many fishermen from South India, who, pushing out their *catamarans* through the surf, spread the first net at sunrise, and are still dragging in the last when twilight falls.

There is another road out of Colombo—the road to Kandy. The old capital of the Kings lies in the hills, at near 2000 feet, and after the heat of the day a divine freshness descends on her. The beauty of Kandy—the lake, the flowering trees of the valley, the primeval verdure of the forests all around—is hardly for pen to tell. When twilight falls, and the breeze comes blowing, a myriad crickets sing in the trees, many birds give out an evening note, and the fireflies in unison emit their mysterious light. A solemn bell tolls at the dark. It sounds from the lakeside where rises the Buddhist shrine—the Temple of the Tooth—and presently the temple drums beat. The worshippers come stealing through the trees; it is a night of full moon, and they carry flower offerings to the gods. By the temple gate, where ancient tortoises raise their heads from out the moat, sit the blind, chanting for alms, and a leper or two, ghostly white in the moonlight. In the outer courtyard are flower sellers, and here, beside the drummers, a temple musician plays upon a pipe. A group of priests enter; yellow robed and shaven, they come from the monastery across the lake, and the boy novices walk with them. In the small inner temple there is barely moving room; it is hot to suffocation. On a silver tray before the shrine are massed the flower offerings, blossoms of jasmine, of frangipani, of the temple flower, or *panchseela*—from the Tree of the Five Good Deeds—and the odour of them is strong to overpowering. The moments pass; the chief priest of Kandy drones the



evening prayers; the Buddha gazes benignly upon those who worship, and the just and the unjust kneel for his benediction.

After my return from Australia they sent me to South Africa. Here I wandered alone for many months, and formed affinities with that land which have never tarnished. I went by ox-waggon to the new goldfields at Barberton, a six weeks' journey. I saw Kimberley, Rorke's Drift, and the grave of Carey the Informer at Port Elizabeth. I lived with the Colonists on their farms. Above all, I came to love the Zulus; carrying away in my mind images of their *kraals* on the green uplands, and the haunting memory of their cries passing from hill to hill before the going down of the sun.

I was home again at sixteen, and settled down more or less to study. But my longing for travel was strong as ever; in two summers, spent in South Germany, I tore the very hearts from Württemberg and Bavaria.

I went in due time to St. Andrews University, thence to Cambridge, taking a scratch course at each. My scholastic studies ended at twenty; and when I think of what they amounted to, I emit a slight, sardonic laugh. Science is just exact knowledge, organised; yet in an age when science counts supremely, I went out into the world with none whatever. Unknowingly I was handicapped, as it were five hundred yards in a mile, yet was expected to pit my wits against others and to rise to the top of the tree. The rubbish they taught me! I knew no chemistry, but I was an authority on St. Paul's journeys. I knew no physics, but I had been posted on the gerund, the aorist, and the e-enclitic. I knew no geology, but had been taught on which side a house ought to fall in an earthquake. My brain seemed full of mental junk; but it had been no one's business to show me the World as a Whole,



to explain the Reign of Law throughout the Universe, and the majestic sequence of Cause and Effect. I was not dense; but I never came across a man who both knew the right things, and the right way to teach them.

My father could not help me. He certainly taught me the greatest thing of all—to treat others as I would myself—but his mind, like the minds of so many at that day, was theological. He had no use for science. Biology, Geology and such-like knowledge riddled the Bible, dissipated its miracles; so he brushed them on one side, and taught me to do the same. I took my religion, as everyone also seemed to do, without thought. My cast of mind remained theological until I was twenty-four.

In the eyes of my own class, strangely enough, I *was* educated. The older folk asked of a youth that he should be “good form,” and defer to women, and be conventionally religious along Anglican or Church of Scotland lines; and because I was these, what lay behind my forehead didn’t seem to matter. Science! It wasn’t quite the thing; it made people sceptics. In this world of well-to-do gentlefolk, Darwin meant less than dinner jackets; I often heard them speak of the greatest man of the age with contempt.

Do you know about unconscious cerebration? The Professor of Psychology at St. Andrews once sprung this on us, and proceeded to enlarge on it for the space of an hour. It is an inner, or second self, a person who thinks while you sleep, who turns over all sorts of problems you had given up, and suddenly at the end of weeks, or months, or it may be a year, places them in your brain, docketed and solved.

Many hundred times, I suppose, from that landing in Sydney harbour, onwards, I had sworn myself to a life of travel. How I was to carry this out, when to begin, and where to get the money, were thought over, simmered

in the mind for years, and remained unsolved, until—  
Lo and behold!—"unconscious cerebration" stepped in,  
and the way was clear.

Gold Mining! I was to go to South Africa, my beloved country, and start there. I had seen the new gold-fields there, and the Ballarat mines in Australia. Gold mining meant a return to Africa, adventure, an income, and afterwards the wide world. I had hit it! An oyster-opener lay ready to my hand; it remained but to prise apart the shell.

## CHAPTER II

### HOW I OPENED THE SHELL

So gold mining it was: and I set out again for South Africa. Landing at Durban, I journeyed to the terminus of the Natal Railway, then at Newcastle. From Newcastle, a coach to the Transvaal left daily, drawn by eight mules; travelling across the lower slopes of 'Majuba, and over Laing's Nek, a few hours' run brought us to the frontier, at Volksrust.

So far as this, I knew the road. It was the old De Kaap road I had travelled in the waggon five years before; but now, beyond Volksrust, we turned off due west, for Barberton was dead, or dying, and Johannesburg was king. On the second afternoon, as we bowled along, the endless rolling plains rose up to the Witwatersrand—the White Waters Ridge—and there, spread out mile upon mile, were the smoke stacks and galvanised roofs of the Main Reef. Arrived in the town at dusk, I alighted at the coach office, shook off a layer of dust, stretched my stiffened limbs, and merged myself in the greatest gold-field of the world.

I was soon located on a mine, and at work on the regulation eight-hour shift. If I shaped well, there was the promise of pay after several months. This mine, lying thirty miles from Johannesburg, was not on the Main Reef. It had been discovered by a working prospector, who had sold it, as such men sell their finds, for a mess of pottage. Penniless once more, he hung about the scene of his triumph, and ever and anon would be found lying besotted on the *veld*.

The ore here averaged no more than nine inches wide; but richer by far than the Main Reef, and mined very clean, gave the biggest yield per ton in the whole Transvaal. This attracted notice in financial quarters, and presently the consulting engineer of the most powerful Rand group paid us a visit. I was now employed in the stamp mill, and earned £10 a month. For eight hours each day, or, every third week, each night, I had the amalgam plates in trust; during the morning we scraped these, and the mill manager carried a bucket of amalgam, which was one-third gold, two-thirds mercury, to the safe. Seeing this white paste gather there, day by day, night by night, I too began, as it were, to sit up and take notice. Of the money I had brought from home, £200 remained; one day I took a holiday, interviewed a stock-broker, and placed this sum in the shares, then standing at thirty shillings. Whether it was my purchase, or the buying of the great Johannesburg house, is neither here nor there; but the shares rose steadily to four pounds ten, and I took my first mining profit.

When I had been at this mine a year, it became time to take stock of things. My pay was now £15 a month, and £20 was in sight; but I now realised that neither mill work, assaying, nor the newly introduced cyaniding of tailings led anywhere, and that work in the mine was the only road to knowledge and preferment. This mine, underground, was worked by Cornishmen, and I concluded that they, too, were not what I sought. The Cornish have been the Bourbons of gold mining. With considerable aptitude, they also were the inheritors of tradition, and tradition, after the discovery of the Rand, proved a curse. Even in those days their prestige had begun to suffer.

As I have said, I took stock. A change was indicated, and I returned to Johannesburg. I had finished with sur-

face work. I was now given the underground run of several mines, and although drawing no wage, put in my time in the study of breaking ground, sampling and measurement of ore, and surveying.

Another year went by. I had acquired a certain judgment of mining conditions. I now had access to the use of some capital, and the ear of several influential men. I determined to be done with the Rand for a time, and strike further afield.

I was offered a share in a newly found mine on the Zululand border. Duly reaching the spot, I stayed for a time on the Dutchman's farm, panned the ore, took my samples, summed up the conditions, decided that the venture would not do, and started on the four days' return ride, through Zululand, to the railway. On the second day, my horse failed me, and seeing a large *kraal* not far from the track, I rode the jaded beast there and dismounted.

The natives of the huts, a dozen men or so, were seated on an adjacent green knoll. They sat about a fire, grilling meat on the embers, while their women, preparing the native beer, carried it to them in calabashes. The headman of the *kraal*, whose belly was much distended by the beer, was nevertheless provided of a sound head. The sum we eventually closed on was eighteen shillings, for which a sturdy Basuto pony was placed at my disposal, and a boy instructed to lead back my worn horse.

The new beast started finely; but the next evening, as I rode, a thunderstorm came on, and galloping in the darkness, between the lightning flashes, he fell, and went to pieces. A night's rest failed to set him up, and the following day, while yet ten miles from the railway, he was utterly spent.

I had sworn to catch that train. It meant spending



Christmas Eve down country with my friends, and I could do it by abandoning my beast and walking quickly to the railway. My eyes ranged the land for miles, but there was no *kraal*, no native in sight, no possible messenger. Scruple bade me stay where I was, bade me lead the pony to the agreed destination; but my will that morning would have crushed ten thousand scruples. I left the panting beast by the roadside and strode away. I caught the train. I spent Christmas at the old farm. But I learned later that a saddled pony, with a festering back, had wandered for many days, and had had to be killed; and I knew a *kraal* where the white-man's good faith had become tarnished.

Then I scoured the Eastern Transvaal. Fifteen years before ever the Rand was known, Pilgrims' Rest was the scene of a great alluvial gold rush, and it was to famous Barberton I had travelled when a boy. There were now goldfields at De Kaap, at Lydenburg, and throughout the Low Country, lying among mountains, thick bush, and fever-stricken valleys, covering a great belt of country. All of these I wandered over.

In a Cape cart, with four horses, I was driving down to the Klein Letaba. Johann Rissik held the reins—acting surveyor-general of the Transvaal the day they had laid out "Johannes"-burg\*—and H. B. Marshall, ground landlord of half that great town, sat with me on the back seat. Driving out of Pietersburg, we slept at Solomon Marais' farm house, built where the *veld* takes its last dip into the low country. Rising at daylight, we found the old Boer on his *stoep*. He had risen, as was his wont, at three o'clock, had drunk his coffee these two

\* Johannesburg, on the suggestion of Oom Paul himself, was named after Stephanus Johannes Paulus Kruger, President of the Transvaal; Christian Johannes Joubert, Minister of Mines; and Johann Rissik, acting Surveyor-General.



hours, and we found him in his arm-chair placidly awaiting the sunrise.

It was a sweltering day as we drove down the Letaba valley and the fever season was coming on. White men died like flies in the Low Country, and I was minded to tell them the story of a funeral at Pilgrims' Rest. At the Theta mine, a man had been mangled by the machinery; so mangled and bloody was he, that they sent for the mine carpenter, who was careless in these matters, enjoining that his coffin boards should accurately fit.

The funeral *cortège* passed out, and the old Dane gazed professionally on his handiwork. "No yuce'll come out of that one," they heard him say. And to do him justice, no juice did.

We drove along; and suddenly, striking a rock, we went over. The Cape cart lay athwart the road, the hood staved in, the horses kicking furiously at their traces; for all we knew we had broken our necks.

"Save the limejuice!"

From out the *débris* a clear voice had called, a voice, they told me afterwards, which was mine. The precious fluid was safe. So, wonderful to relate, were we. But in a dire strait, my presence of mind was made known to the great ones of the land.

I had been inspecting the Sheba on behalf of some London shareholders, and rode down the mountains into Barberton. The little town, already moribund these five years, was beflagged and excited. In terms of an old contract, a branch line of the Lourenço Marques-Pretoria railway had now been built into Barberton, and the first train was due in that very day. I accompanied the populace to the outskirts of the town.

The train drew in amid cheering. Among the first to alight, to my surprise, was a certain elderly man from Johannesburg, a casual worker about the mines, neither

physically nor mentally strong, a person of no standing whatever. He was stooping, and his face was grey.

"What are *you* doing here?" I said.

"Oh! . . . I've left Johannesburg. I ought never to have gone there . . . it was too hard a life. . . . If only I can get back to Cairo! . . . I had good employment there once, and people knew me."

I said, "How are you going to get to Cairo? It will cost money from here."

"I have only two pounds . . . I hoped to be able to work my way there. I have prayed the dear Lord that He will not desert me."

I had known this man for some years. He was elderly, and feeble, and I had seen him sinking. His tragedy was now upon him, and his appearance there, strange though it seemed, was inevitable. I told him to figure out a sum which would take him to Cairo, and meet me the next day.

We met. The Kaap Valley was bathed in morning light. In a broken voice he mentioned a sum; and because of the sunshine, because I was young and strong, or, perhaps, because of the matter of a Basuto pony, and of other things lying in my memory, I gave it to him, and stood by while he sobbed, and bought him his ticket to Delagoa Bay, placing him aboard the second train which ever ran out of Barberton.

The old man went off with my address, and he was to write. But from Cairo came no letter, nor from the long African coast. I think his God had shown mercy, and had rung down the curtain quickly.

My Transvaal mining education was rounded off as a managing director, a coal mine on the East Rand claiming my services. Three boreholes, put down haphazard on the level *veld*, had located a seam of coal forty-two

feet thick, with twelve feet of good commercial value. The colliery had been well laid out by the manager, an able Scotch miner, and with so wide a seam we were prepared to do great things. But it was our trouble to be late in the field. A market for our coal had still to be secured, and an economic struggle with the other collieries round about loomed ahead.

We worked the output up to 12,000 tons a month, less than half the mine's capacity, with no great trouble. A big contract, with that powerful financial group afore-said, was now in the market, and this we determined to secure. It meant a cut—something like ninepence a ton—and when we had made this, and secured the greater part of the contract, my efforts to lessen the cost of production became frantic. An itemised cost sheet became my bible, and my eye was upon every outgoing. Our colliery, in those days of extravagance, was a model, yet even here were abuses, wheels within wheels, which I could not reach. Some items too were highly vexatious. The Netherlands Railway, a great stickler for demurrage on empty trucks, became a nightmare to us; upon occasions, I stayed with the Kaffirs on our loading platform as late as two in the morning.

It was a great day when I tackled the item of Kaffir medicine. A Boksburg druggist had contracted with the colliery on a quantity basis, and kept sending forward immense jars of highly-flavoured liquids—opening, astringent, or antifebrile as the case might be—which at once disappeared into the stomachs of our eight hundred natives. A visit to the compound, and a dissertation on therapeutics from its superintendent, convinced me that for one kaffir who took medicine as medicine, a dozen were drinking it for the relish of its flavouring. A modified contract was at once enforced with Boksburg, and

the cost of mining our coal decreased by precisely one farthing per ton.

Then there were candles. It seemed to me our consumption was excessive, that the allowance of, I think it was two candles per shift to each native, might be reduced. The manager could not see it, and for a time the point remained unsettled. One evening, as the natives were being hauled up, I stationed myself at the top of the shaft, searching each one as he stepped from the cage. They were taking, as was their wont, all unburnt candle for use in the compound; and, rejecting stumps, I collected off them three bucket loads of quarters, halves, and a goodly proportion of whole candles. Calling for assistance, I conveyed my trophies to the office, where I set them down without a word. The manager looked grim at first, but as he inspected the buckets a something mellower came into his face. We were fellow Scots, and, as I have said, there was a goodly proportion of whole candles. A cash saving might clearly be effected, and his features relaxed to its æsthetic significance. Art is Art, the world over.

Let me say this: our mine, before I left, was producing coal a shilling a ton below our neighbours. We had added a Scotch sales manager to our team—a football international; the scrimmage was now in the enemy's "25."

I made expeditions to the Free State, to inspect diamond mines there, and visited Kimberley again. The vast Premier mine, near Pretoria, was not then known, but one could realise that the five mines of De Beers', together with Jagersfontein, were able to flood the markets.

The diamond a precious stone! I saw them poured by the bushel at De Beers, handled as a grocer would handle currants. There is a practical monopoly, it is true, and great financial interests which regulate prices; but the

foundations of the diamond industry do not really rest on these. They rest on the vanity of woman, on the desire of man. They rest on the sexual instinct itself, a security which I conceive to be gilt-edged.

I did not see Rhodesia in its earliest days. On the Rand we had a horror of quartz mines, of their tendency to lose value at a shallow depth; and we noted that all mines in the Northern Transvaal, that is to say nearest the Rhodesian frontier, while often rich at surface, invariably went wrong in this way. To a seeker of mines the Transvaal had offered more scope; and the Matabele rebellion was some time past, the country settled down, before ever I went North.

Rhodesia was an immense goldfield—that was certain. It might, or might not, prove economically rich; but a gold belt spread for hundreds of miles, and ore deposits lay scattered throughout it from end to end.

When Cecil Rhodes annexed this country, for political reasons, he nevertheless figured on finding it a goldfield. What had he gone on? There was the geological evidence of Mauch; the crude assumptions of the few traders to Lobengula's Kraal; but I never heard that any first-hand evidence came his way. Now that the country was thrown open, and prospectors had worked for years, it was child's play to diagnose a great goldfield; but I did not cease to ponder the problem of Rhodes's earlier knowledge.

I was impressed with some of the mines, and with the statements of leading authorities in Buluwayo. I learned later that the figures which had impressed me were mostly lies; these "leading authorities" were no more entitled to pronounce on gold mines than a London haberdasher.

A curious thing had happened. The English aristocracy, following Rhodes blindly, had next allied itself with



London company promoters. It now directed the Rhodesian Companies, helped to finance them, on terms, and had shipped its scions and younger sons wholesale to the land of promise.

When I first went to Rhodesia, the younger sons were in the ascendant, running things. Grouped physically, they were a fine body of men; but as scientific miners worse than futile, and in company mongering not too scrupulous. The point, however, is this: because Rhodesian mining lacked professional treatment, it languished fifteen years. There were payable deposits in the country, but, with rare exceptions, it was the unpayable which were developed and worked. Men rushed for the white quartz reefs. They were easily found. They disclosed ancient workings too, which sometimes went a hundred feet deep. "If the ancients"—argued the younger sons and the pseudo-experts—"if the ancients, with their lack of machinery, could work these mines at a profit, how much greater to-day shall our profit be?"

The "ancients" theory was the mainstay of Rhodesia for years; but of course its value, as evidence, was precisely *nil*. The ancients, whom I conceive to have been Arabs, worked their mines with slaves. The very food supply of the workers would be grown by other slaves, and, excepting the slight item of supervision, the winning of the gold cost the mine owners nothing at all. A mine yielding 20/- a ton, let us say in the year 1697, gave the Arabs a profit of 20/- a ton; the same mine, in the year 1897, equipped with £100,000 worth of modern machinery, was being worked for 10/- a ton *loss*.

Most of these white quartz mines of Rhodesia went wrong shallow. Others held down better, let us say to 500 or to 800 feet; but with a narrow reef, and no great length, seldom yielded enough ore to repay cost of equipment. These were not mines for companies to handle;

but they were priceless object lessons to me in mine valuation. Working the schistose, and the "banded" deposits—lower grade, but less ephemeral than the quartz reefs—Rhodesia should yet justify herself as a goldfield. And the era of the younger sons has passed.

Time slipped away. I had been six and a half years in the Transvaal, or roving over South Africa. I was twenty-seven years old, and a reconsidering of the position, a stock-taking of maturity, presented itself insistently to my mind.

It was the old story—travel hunger! While there had been new fields to study, new mines to see, I was content; judgment was maturing, experience becoming valuable. Now there were no new fields in South Africa, and it gave me joy to think, what was indeed the truth, that knowledge of other mines and methods was needful to my career.

I decided to leave the Rand. Yet I knew that among the goldfields of the world I should find no other like it. But twelve years ago, Witwatersrand had been bare *veld*; here the *korhaans* called in the waste, and I suppose that between Jan Meyer's house and the farm of Piet Bezuidenhout lay no single habitation. Now there was a large town, three converging railways, forty miles of mines, immense exploitation in progress, and a growing output. I saw that the Rand would yield not less than a thousand millions sterling.

I saw other things. The great "boom" was over, setting up a backswing of the pendulum, and money was getting tight. The Jameson Raid was now history, but the capitalists had not yet learned to leave politics alone. In the mines, from top to bottom, there was extravagance. The vital fact of all was the altitude. The rolling highveld, where Johannesburg stood, was 6000 feet above sea

level, and men's hearts worked at abnormal pressure. Buoyancy, optimism, was in the air. It put more gold in the ore. It cut down costs. It refused to see the weak points, the poorer patches in the deeper mines, the gigantic capital expenditure that loomed ahead. The big men, fortified by their engineers, sent home glowing reports, and in private their talk was yet more glowing. Assuming every ton of ore to be payable, actuarial tables were drawn on, and the "lives" of the mines, with a dividend of seven per cent. and redemption of capital, were figured to the third place of decimals. They believed it too, these capitalists. At one time we all believed it. The altitude of the Rand had much to answer for.

The time of my departure was come, and I summoned some twenty-five of my friends to a farewell. We dined at the Rand Club—the old building, and the scene of many famous exploits. It was here that Edouard Lippert, the ablest German who ever lived in the Transvaal, speaking in English, and defending the catering committee from a combined onslaught, put our chosen orators to rout. It was from the balcony, dangerously crowded, that Sir Sidney Shippard addressed the mob during the Jameson Raid, and I, standing next him, marvelled we did not go crashing into the street. It was here we received the Reform prisoners, fresh from Pretoria Gaol—a lurid night, when I broke the stout marble table in two pieces. It was in the Club dining room, in the "boom" time, that the lunchers at one table were valued at twenty millions, on paper; and here the caterer of those days, M. Heritier, was wont to preside, carver in hand, before a whole roasted lamb.

And the game of poker! How often had I risen from dinner, entered the card room, played through the night, and emerged for the wash-and-brush-up which preceded breakfast? Our set played the legitimate game of those



days—two pounds ante, straddle, and eight to play—and one could win or lose his two hundred. We were the moderates; of that other famous sitting, when £84,000 changed hands, we spoke with bated breath.

Into this famous building I led my guests. An orchestra welcomed us with sweet music, the wine-butler uncorked an exquisite *Lafitte*, and we sat merrily to dine.

Five of that little party have gone down to the shades. With others fate has most cruelly dealt; but that night, at least, no cloud rested on our brows. There were speeches. These over, I sang them "Milord Sir Smith" and "Brown of Colorado" to the full orchestra; I was the host, and they clapped me a double encore.

On my right, there sat one who has since come to high estate. Holding his glass to the light, he muttered, as if in reflection, "This is a fine claret."

"It ought to be," I whispered like a damned fool in his ear; "it costs thirty shillings a bottle."

I had but uttered the words, when he hailed a waiter, calling for a fresh bottle. Having drunk copiously, he anointed his head, crying loudly, "It costs thirty shillings! Thirty shillings a bottle!" and the ruby liquid ran down his beard, as it had been Aaron's beard, the Lord's Anointed. "Thirty shillings a bottle!" the cry was taken up. Corks popped furiously, and my friends laved themselves, wallowed in the exquisite wine, till they could wallow no longer. The bill that I paid next day was for £120.

And now I was off! Off to break new ground, with retaining fees in my pocket. The useless being turned out by Cambridge was no longer useless. I had come up against realities. I had a profession. I was able to earn money. Moreover, I was as free as air, and the wide world beckoned me. I had opened my oyster shell. It remained but to swallow what the Mayors of Colchester call "the succulent bivalve."

## CHAPTER III

### BEYOND THE BLAAUWBERG

THE day before I sailed from Africa, the last afternoon, I walked down to the old fish-market of Cape Town, by the shores of Table Bay. Under a cloudless African sky the Malay fishwives, purveyors of *snoek*, bartered remnants with the "Cape" people, their voices rising high in guttural Dutch. Their men, the fishers, were given over to smoking and relaxation; in the mellowness of the afternoon they lay stretched about asleep. Malay children, amphibious, splashed joyously among the boats. These folk were the descendants of Javanese slaves, sent here to the order of a Dutch Governor-General. Acclimatised now, and prospering—fishsellers, laundrymen, cab-owners, great workers among horses—Cape Town had long ago become their all in all.

I was waiting for the dusk, for that view, before sunset, of the Blaauwberg. On such evenings, in this rare Southern atmosphere, those distant mountains suffered a change, became utterly impalpable; on this very evening, as dusk stole across the Cape Flats, they faded out of all existence.

Yet this range, a mere illusion in the twilight of the peninsula, was the Southern portal. Beyond it lay the whole of Africa. Paarl rested this side, under the foothills, Worcester beneath the higher peaks, and so one came to Hex River Pass; the train which drew out of Cape Town to-night would be passing over the Karroo in the morning, rushing towards Bloemfontein. . . .

A coastal boat had gone out too. It was passing Hout's

Bay now, and the "Twelve Apostles"; some time in the night it would round Agulhas, heading up into the Indian Ocean. If it was rough off Port Elizabeth, they lowered you overboard in a basket. When you had passed St. John's River you were off Kaffraria. This was a green land, clumped with bush, and smoke would be rising from the *kraals* of the Pondos. Durban lay ahead, the road to Maritzburg and Greytown, to the Zulu country, to Swazieland and Lydenburg. Everywhere the sun would be shining, coaches and postcarts starting on long journeys, native runners singing as they carried the mails; the sleek Boer cattle, envy of the *bijwoners*, would be still grazing in the high-veld; on the Natal farms they would be getting in the mealies, the peaches would be picked, the pumpkins for next year's use set out on the roofs; in many a *kraal* up and down the land, where a young beast had been killed, there would be beer drinking and carousal far into the night.

And I was leaving it all! At dawn there would come reincarnation of the Blaauwberg, the sun would rise over the Karroo, and the bounteous life of this land renew itself while I sailed far away. Innumerable memories, subtle aspects of South Africa crowded upon my mind. It was a thousand miles long, a world in itself, profoundly various. There were vast plains where the antelope still roamed, dark *kloofs* where baboons barked harshly at the dawn, desert places where life did not exist; yet within these same borders Chaka had ruled, the Bantu race had reached a negroid apotheosis, and thirty or forty populous tribes of black men now moved and had their being. The whites held this land now—British and Dutch, a mere handful, and they at each other's throats; among the farmers on their farms, amid the flabby environment of the small towns, rancour was spreading broadcast, simmering slowly into hate.

At this dark and witching hour, standing by the old fish-market, I too seemed presently gathered with the impalpable. The Malays had wended to their own quarters, the Cape people were gone to their homes, and I was alone. The wavelets lapped, and there came the distant sounds of a shunting train, but these never yet put an end to reverie. Impalpable! Yes. In the darkness I seemed verily disembodied—a spirit, gazing northward. My soul had gone into South Africa. At that moment I was of her, all-knowing and all-pervading.

I saw where *blesboks*, and all the antelope tribe lay couched for the night, from across the bay there, even up to Lake N'gami; I saw into each lair, knowing those which lay for dawn, and those which would rise to feed by light of the yet unrisen moon. I sensed a tramp of heavy feet, and the cracking of twigs; in the precincts of Addo bush the elephants were still feeding. The protected Eland of Natal lay resting, hard beneath the Berg, but a small herd of wild Eland, the last in the Transvaal, grazed beside Olifants River; Impala darted past them, fleeing from a distant roar, and a herd of Koodoo, soon to be dead of the rinderpest. I saw hippos laving themselves in the deep pools behind Komati Poort. Others swam in those calm reaches above Victoria Falls, where the double rainbow hung all day long, the cataract crashed thundering, and trees in the "Rain Forest" dripped the spray. Over a hundred rocky places baboons were now scampering, playing together in brutish frolic; especially could I hear those in the *kloof* at Heidelberg, and a hoarse, continuous barking from Devils' Kantoor, above the valley of De Kaap. On the placid high-veld, fearing no beast of prey these many years, recumbent cattle restfully chewed the cud. Immensely lank secretary birds, inveterate killers of snakes, stood here and there adjacent; standing upon one leg, sentinels in demeanour, they

were nevertheless fast asleep. The *paauw*, or greater bustard, whose head peered at you above long grass; the *korhaan*, the lesser, screeching and circling in the hot afternoon sun; the uncouth *oddodors* that had flown "honking" over the Noodsberg—all of these had passed into the darkness. The partridges lay nested, the grey-wings and the red; and the smaller birds—down in Natal the *m'swempis*, the ducks on Lake Chrissie, the snipe in the salt pans along the Barberton road, the red-breasted *sakabulas*, snared for the velvety-black tail feathers, and innumerable doves roosting high up in the trees. The bird kingdom was settled to its sleep; but the porcupines were abroad, the antbears, the hyænas, the egg-sucking iguanas, and all the predatory tribes of the night.

My omniscience, benign and pervading, rested in these moments upon all the natives. Out in the Western desert, Bushmen and Korannas lay in the open, under the stars; hunters these, small men, thickset and gnarled, they would steal to their traps long before the dawn. In the rude huts and caves, cushioned upon their immense buttocks, lay their women, lying beneath skins, a child under each arm. To the North, beyond Kuruman, beyond Gabarones, the *gemsbok* hunters and the *kaross* makers advanced far into the Kalahari—the warriors, as it were, of the pusillanimous Bechuana tribes. The rank and file, after a day's tillage of the dry, unfruitful soil, were laid down to rest; while Khama, their paramount chief, thin, mild and elderly, sat alone in his *stad* by Palapchwe, reading the scriptures.

Over all the high lands of the central plateau—the Karroo, the Orange Free State, the Transvaal, heading for the distant mining fields, bearing wool and hides to the railways or the coastal ports, carrying liquors and provisions to the interior—trains of waggons had passed during the day, and now, in a thousand outspans, were



drawn up for the night. The white men—the transport riders—having supped, sit apart and smoke; their mattresses are laid on the ground, beneath the waggons. With each train, it is true, there goes a tented waggon; but these are for their women, when they travel, or for use in the rains. The native drivers sit about a fire. It is fed with dried cowdung, and the acrid smoke that rises causes their eyes to water. In a paraffin tin coffee is being boiled. Some draw at their water pipes, others whittle down leather thongs for whips, and when one raises a mouth organ to his lips their eyes turn eagerly to him. Music steals on the night—a minor repetitive, formless, without beginning or end. It is a mournful drawing in of breath, a mumbled talking, as it were, to the little instrument, then quick expulsion and a drawing in once more. It is strangely minor, and so rhythmic that feet shuffle and bodies sway; it causes in these savages a low murmuring of song, and in me, who have heard it a thousand times in the African nights, an ecstasy of sadness.

Beside each waggon its oxen lie, sixteen beasts, large boned, long horned, tethered by their *reims*, and but a moment ago driven in from the grass. At sunrise, having been driven to water, they will be rounded up by the *voorlooper*—a Kaffir boy, naked but for the discarded tunic of a British redcoat—and the driver, calling each beast by its name, calling to "*Postman! Engelsman! Blacksmit! Estcourt!*" in a high-pitched invective of Dutch and English, will begin to *inspan*.

In the fertile Eastern belt, in the great territory of the Pondos, the Griquas, the Galekas, the Basutos, reaching North even to the borders of Natal, the tribes were now sunk in sleep. Over the embers of fires old men might linger—the heads of families, telling of their youth, and their prowess, bubbling water in their ox-horn pipes,

coughing as they draw in the smoke. In the silence a dog might bark at cattle nosing too freely around the *kraal*, there might come a ruffling of feathers from the fowl roost, the startled call of a dove, the rush of some small animal, the cry of a distant hyæna—yet Kaffraria was asleep after its labours, and slept deeply.

But in distant Swazieland, at the King's Kraal, there is no sleep. There had been a great hunt, lasting three days, and the carcasses of many bucks had been brought in—meaty and luscious *rietboks*, gamey *'nkonkas*, and the tender little *duikers*; the fires to cook them were stoked up, the preparations for grilling well in hand. Umbandine himself, his hunting days over, had not been of the party; but it had pleased him to extol the hunters, and to give orders for a great dance.

On the very instant, runners had set out—summoners of the *indunas*, and of the King's witch doctors—and others, ascending the neighbouring hills, had cried in the Zulu tongue far down the valleys. By noon the news was over half Swazieland, and the young men, from as far distant as thirty miles, making for the King's Kraal. They carried the ox-hide shield, the throwing and the stabbing assegai, the kerrie fashioned of the black and white *unsumbet*, and ran with a long, swinging stride. They were smeared over with fat, their teeth were white and faultless, their bodies the bodies of Greek Gods; and when they thought of the dance, of the grilled meats, and the foaming *tshwala*, they sang for very joy.

In the nearer country, when they cried the news, commotion had fallen on the women. The mealie gatherers heard it, the bird scarers who sat on raised platforms by the patches of millet, the maidens who were washing themselves in the cold pools. They would be there! It was an easy walk to the King's Kraal, and there had not been a big dance these many moons. Plump married

women, busy around the huts, heard the cry, and hung themselves with beads. With matrimony, their hair had been plastered brown, standing out clumped and stiff from their heads. It needed no touch now, and the costume itself, the beaded lappet, hung discreetly from the thighs. Slinging a suckling babe to their breasts, they too had presently set out.

It is verging on midnight now at the King's Kraal, and the full moon has at last risen. It shines upon a great assemblage. A dozen fat young oxen have been killed, supplementing the meat of the bucks, and many calabashes of native beer stand about—pinkish and frothing, fermented from the millet. The warriors, primed with beer, gorged with meat, though not yet to repletion, await the signal.

Umbandine, the king, stands up. Grossly fat, he is raised into his place. Moreover, he is drunk. A trader that day—a would-be concessionaire—had sent a case of champagne into the *Kraal*, and Umbandine loves champagne more than he loves all his women.

He is of the Swazies, who are of the Zulus, who are the physical aristocrats of all the Bantu race. In his day he has been glorious too, and a warrior. Now he is unwieldy, and played out, and drunk; but he is the king, and the *indunas*, and the witch doctors, and all the people prostrate themselves. "*Bayete! Inkosi ami!*" they shout, and as he sinks to the ground all the dancers spring up, running quickly forward.

Among the older men, sitting so observant there on their haunches, many have danced the real dance on this spot, sung the war song of the Swazie race, seen the smellers-out point to the sacrifices of propitiation. Alas for the coming of white men, and the vanished power! for the good old days that are gone! This thing is well enough in its way, and there has been no such a layout



of meat these ten years; yet it is but a masque, a *fête champêtre*, a summoning of decadent revellers to Versailles!

But it was a fine revel, I warrant you. Four hundred men danced at the King's Kraal, and as they danced the ground trembled. Four hundred *sakabula* plumes were dipped, and rose again, the shields whirled and whirled in unison, the broad stabbing assegais glinted together in the moonlight, the chant of the king's divine majesty was heard, and all the people rocked with emotion. When at last the victorious song of the Swazies arose, the very hills echoed it into the night.

Whether or not I still stood by the fish-market, God knows. But this I know: that my spirit roamed the land, which now lay as in the white light of day. Here was the high-veld again, and a Dutch village I had never seen; but I knew it for Amersfoort, on the Transvaal's Eastern border. The time is before my day, too. It is *Nachtmaal*—the Holy Communion—and the Boers in their waggons are coming in from many miles around. The tents, made of the waggon sails, are already pitched in the market square, there is a great drinking of coffee, and the *predikants* are going around visiting.

What's that they are saying? A defeat of the *rooineks*? Round old Du Toits' waggon there is an excited group, and other Boers come running across. Yes! The natives had the news an hour ago. It came to Du Toits' waggon-driver from a Swazie runner. Cetewayo's own *impi* came upon them near the Buffalo River. They were cut to pieces, and the survivors are fleeing into Natal.

And I knew they were right. The day before, while Amersfoort prepared its *Nachtmaal*, the *impi*, throwing out its crescents, had closed on Lord Chelmsford's army. Rushing in, raising a great cry of victory, they had

stabbed again and again, and I saw the redcoats go down in the sunshine. That was at Isandhlwana—the field of the “little hand”; yet these natives knew it at Amersfoort, 140 miles as the crow flies, within the 24 hours, and I thought again of the hill-tops of Zululand, and of those cries that had passed from man to man before the going down of the sun.

My enchantment still rested on me. A moment more, and I had passed to the “Shoot.” Here the Barberton road steeply dips—more steeply than you have ever thought of—into the valley of De Kaap, and I saw them again chaining the wheels of the waggons.

At Coetzeestroom, below the Kantoer, in this same region, six men shovelled into a sluice. Weather-beaten and old, they were the last alluvial miners in South Africa, and I saw that their time was nearly come.

A blood-red sun rose over the Low Country, setting Mozambique on fire. In this phantasmagoria of dawn, I saw myself again swimming Olifant’s River, toiling many hours through a waterless country, parched and weary, coming at length into Leydsdorp; and I saw a funeral set out from the Sutherland Reef, where the manager had broken his neck.

Now I am riding into Middelburg, in the days before the railway. I come from the German Mission at Botsabelo, a dozen miles away. It is the Transvaal spring, and the blending out there of the young willows with the peach blossoms had filled my soul with peace. There is a little procession coming down the opposite slope into Middelburg, and I remember that one was expected. They left Pretoria yesterday morning, and were to stay all night at Bronkhorst Spruit, where the Boers shot us to pieces in ’80. The *landdrost* and fifty burghers have ridden out to meet them.

Here they come! A *veld-kornet* rides at the head with

the Transvaal flag—the Dutch flag, with the green across it—and half a dozen armed Boers follow. Then two Cape carts; and in the second, talking with the *landdrost*, a shaggy old man with a long beard, bushy brows, masterful eyes, and sacs beneath them that hang like dew-laps down his cheeks. He wears a markedly Presbyterian frock coat, an impossible tall hat, he spits copiously, his breast is crossed with a sash, he is followed by a hundred loyal Boers on horseback, and is known to all the world for Stephanus Johannes Paulus Kruger, master of the Transvaal these twenty years, utterly fearless, and greatest personality, save one, in all Africa. I see him a young man on his Rustenberg farm, a pursuer of big game, a daring hunter of lions; snake bitten, and alone, I see him draw a great knife, severing the finger; a field cornet now, he leads his men in the native wars, and at *Potgieters*, taking his life in his hand, he enters the kaffirs' cave, smoking them out; soon he leads a *commando*; now he rides, a counsellor, to Lydenburg, and with the capital removed to Potchesfstroom, becomes of the Boers' inner circle; I see him later in Pretoria, rallier of the people, inspirer of 'Majuba, then the plenipotentiary of peace, and ever head and shoulders above his fellows; lastly, full of years and honour, I see him come to Paardekraal; standing by the national cairn, he, the president, exhorts his Boer people, and they know him for the greatest of their race.

Go your way, old patriot! Fulfil in storm and stress your destiny. Your burghers, clattering along there, escort to Middelburg a master spirit.

Greatest save one! In Adderley Street, a thousand miles away—(or is it here, near the fish market)—at the top of the street, among the oak trees, in the very shadow of Table Mountain, stands Parliament House. Years ago, as I wandered past, a man had come down the steps,

a thickset man in tweeds and a bowler hat—an English gentleman. Crossing the street, to the office of the Chartered Company, he had presently emerged, and entering a Cape cart, drawn by two superb horses, had been driven rapidly away.

Save one! And this was he. Premier and dictator, and of the race of giants, his presence gave a glory to all this peninsula. . . . But Rhodes passed, and the arc light of Africa went out. The brooding spirit was gone from the slopes of the mountain. The King was dead, and lacking his inspiration, men now sank to the old, old level. In a brief spasm, crying "We will make Africa!" they came together in union; but the fine frenzy of it passed, with the years, leaving only the husk, and the shell, and the hate. . . .

It is dark and silent beside the fish-market. This is my last night in Africa, and thoughts of her crowd upon me. Let me go where I may sleep.

## CHAPTER IV

### AUSTRALIA TO THE KLONDYKE

THE Elizabethan Age of gold-mining was come. Short and brilliant, like its prototype in dramatic literature, this lasted a bare twenty years, yet gave to the world the wonderful discoveries in the Transvaal, West Australia, Colorado, Yukon and Nevada.

To stretch the analogue: The unapproachable Rand was Shakespeare; Kalgoorlie, so richly veined, doomed to so early death, was Marlowe; Cripple Creek, high above the world, yet vitally of it, was Sir Philip Sydney; the gold dredges—the intrusion into imaginative mining of realism—were Ben Jonson; the Klondyke, of a lesser calibre, was Massinger; and the adjacent Nevada camps of Goldfield and Tonopah were Beaumont and Fletcher. The Elizabethan Age began with the discovery of the Rand in 1886. Colorado and West Australia followed in the early '90s. Klondyke was found in '97, and the Nevada finds carried the era into the new century. By 1906 the period of great discovery was over, and gold mining entering into a twilight. But that is to anticipate. In 1898 the Elizabethan era was in its zenith; and in January of that year, sitting in my London hotel, I vowed to go down every gold mine in the world.

First, I went to Mysore. In this Native State of Southern India, in a bare, rolling country, a number of English companies had been mining for years. They worked one continuous reef, several miles long, whose value and permanence, even then, classed it about the finest quartz vein ever known.



Each morning, very early, I went underground, and by mid-day my inspection was over. The hauling engines being driven by natives, riding in the skips was forbidden, and in the great heat, from depths of 1000 or 1500 feet, I climbed the ladders to the surface. Arriving there in a profuse sweat, I was met by a native bearing a woollen overcoat, wrapped in this, escorted to a hot bath, and presently found myself seated beside the manager at breakfast. The service was perfection, the cooking dainty, while such luxuries as oysters and prawns from the Malabar Coast, and strawberries from Bangalore, were served in my honour.

I will not say the delicious eating influenced my judgment of the Mysore mines, but to one newly from South Africa it was something of a revelation. On the fields there the food was rough, and the service by Kaffir waiters ready. In the mine boarding houses the usual dish was a stew known as "Cabbage Brady"; one could locate the cabbage, but whether the Brady was the Irish part of the stew, or a corruption of *braisée*, I could never determine. At even the best African hotels, the pouring of mint sauce was held to transmute mutton into lamb, and the *cuisine* of the average hostel was slovenly and poor. In a paper I once picked up, a paper of the catering trade, a letter signed "African Hotel-keeper" caught my eye. It began: "When I give my guests turkey, I serve it boiled, with a good *bechamel* sauce." "*When* you do!" I murmured. . . .

As house servant, the Indian was altogether the Kaffir's superior; as miner, the positions were reversed. Underground, nimbleness of mind does not offset muscle, nor can vegetarian compete with meat eater, and I estimated it took three coolie miners to do the work of the average Kaffir. Not but that the Indian would respond to feeding. Even as I made my estimates, some profes-

sional wrestlers arrived from Bangalore. Seated with the mine managers above the throng, where we were scented and garlanded by the native *impresario*, I saw men as strong as elephants struggle furiously together.

I went on to Australia. The West Australian "boom" was just beginning. Famous Coolgardie, discovered some years before, was a dying field, but the mines at Kalgoorlie, twenty miles away, were now developing phenomenally. Many of the smaller camps, too, in this goldfield some hundreds of miles long, reported good finds. A railroad from the coast already served Kalgoorlie, and a short branch was about to be opened to Kanowna. Here, where quartz was mined, they had come upon gold-bearing gravel in an old river bed; as this passed shallow, and very rich, under the cemetery, the coffins of Kanowna's dead were lowered, and the gravel which lay about them "cleaned up."

This great Westralian goldfield was a desert: that is to say, a waterless region, where no grass grew, but only low scrub, and saltbush, and in parts an endless forest of the smaller gums. There was no rainfall worth mention, and they condensed the brackish water out of the mines. In the bathroom of the Kalgoorlie hotel, I stood beneath a diminutive reservoir, pulled a string, felt a trickle down the back, and paid two shillings; it was cheaper to buy liquor than water, and one saw numbers in the streets who had taken full advantage of this.

But the climate was buoyant, well-nigh perfect, and one passed from camp to camp, over hundreds of miles, with never a cloud in the sky. Sometimes I drove by night; and in the moonlight saw trains of loaded camels, with their Pathan drivers, travelling silently to outlying mines. There was the coastal belt, too, a watered and parklike country of great fertility; one realised Wes-

tralia's future would one day lie here. At Broome, far up the coast, the fleet of pearling schooners was assembled. The owners were whites, the divers were Cingalese, Japanese, Filipinos and Malays, and the schooners were manned by the half-caste riff-raff of the Eastern Seas. A number of the aborigines hung about this place, followed by troops of mongrel dogs; they were loafers and drunkards, and their women the chattels of the pearling fleet. At Broome, I saw a native throw the boomerang. He was undersized and deformed; but the missile went from his hand like a swift bird, hummed in the air, completed two long swinging circles, and fell beside his feet.

Of the Eastern colonies I renewed boyish knowledge, breaking much fresh ground. Queensland, a great mining country, was ranged from end to end. There I was "salted." To me, panning his "prospect," came an old Irishman from his hut—risen from a bed of fever. But I saw him, with devilment undimmed, place pilules of mud stealthily upon a ledge, which were presently gone, and all round the rim of my pan shone a streak of gold. At Charters Towers, a new shaft had been sunk. This was 2500 feet deep, and being not yet equipped with guides and cage, was served by a bucket. The manager and I stood upon the bucket's rim, and were lowered; but half way down there came a spin on the rope, and soon we were going round like a teetotum. At the bottom, how reached I hardly knew, the old manager put his head between his hands and sighed; he was as sick as a dog. For myself, I decided that a sinking bucket without guides, *and* a drop of 2500 feet, was hardly good enough.

At the Charters Towers races, a great festival of North Queensland, the sun shone brightly, the gentry paraded, the cup candidates were led back and forth, and above the stentorian voices of bookmakers a band played lively



music. By himself on the green lawn, all unconsidered, sat a native boy, a nurse to some up-country squatter's lady, landed suddenly here in the great world. He sat there *watching*, deathly still, utterly overawed. He was twelve years old, his English the purest that tongue ever spoke, and he asked me if he had come to heaven. Poor little man! Consumption, drink, syphilis, the spear—whichever it may be—your road to heaven did not lie across the Towers' green lawn.

Ever and anon I found myself in Sydney, and afternoons, if it were fine weather, you might have seen me in the Domain, stretched luxuriantly on the grass, a "*Bulletin*" covering my face. You would have thought me asleep; but oftener I lay there thinking. Down the slopes was the vista of the harbour; a hundred pleasant homes stood about each cove, and the ferry boats went plying among them unceasingly. Other recumbent figures, heedless like myself of the conventions, shared the Domain. Mostly there were the deadbeats of Sydney, as like as not dossed there for the night—drunkards to a man, members of a considerable legion throughout this continent; for drink was rampant out here. At any given moment, I reflected, a thousand Irish publicans up and down Australia were in the act of drawing beer.

These were the Antipodes!—I kept saying to myself. This, twelve thousand miles away, was the world underneath! And what a rich and rare world too. Brilliant birds, weird animals, strange trees, a sombre beauty were for the looking; and over the land were gold and silver and copper, coalfields, vineyards and orchards, wheat plains, dairy pastures, and endless merino flocks cropping the rich feed.

You would have thought to see the Australians thickly spread over this glorious campaign. But excepting a picked minority, they were not. These men of our race,

inheritors of one of the world's choicest tracts, had viewed it, had fled from it as from the plague, and were crowded in their coastal cities, till the capital of each state held nearly half that state's people.

Up and down these cities' streets moved crowds of meat-fed men and women, well-dressed, prosperous, full of their own worth, to whom Europe was but a name. With rare exception, these people were whites, and I found the cardinal policy of the country based on this fact. Australia has set out on a great experiment. Her aborigines are dead, or dying out fast. The Chinese, who came in the early mining days, are mostly gone away. The Kanakas, brought in to work the sugar fields of Queensland, have been sent back to the Islands, and this great continent is now solely the heritage of whites. Australians have determined it shall remain so. They deny entrance to the coloured peoples; they place certain tests of entry upon even the lower whites, and profess their aim is to build up, in this far Southern land, a super-race of best Caucasian strain.

A fine ideal!—and yet not without alloy. Our natives of British India may not enter here. And amongst the races on whom exclusion falls are the Japanese. But the Japanese are a powerful people, and to avenge contumely of this sort are capable of blowing the Australian cities to bits. One thing only may be expected to restrain them—the prestige of Britain; and the ideal of a “White Australia” always assumes the British fleet to be lying round the corner.

The real meaning of a “White Australia,” the meaning of a million wage-earners, and of nine out of ten Australians, is the keeping out of cheap, coloured labour. Thus far it has been kept out; and in high wages, and conditions of life, Australia has become white labour's paradise. But no man, no class, can stand continued

prosperity; it seems to me that in gaining the whole world, labour in Australia is losing her own soul.

I would cavil at no ideal; but to be white outwardly—is that everything? It is much, certainly: therefore I say “Be white!” Yet the dregs of Europe can be that. To be white *within*—of a true strain, worthy to hold and enjoy, is Australia’s ideal as I see it. Not again, in this world’s history, will five millions have the shaping of so splendid a heritage; and Australia will be “White” so long as the people realise their heritage, pull together, and work as their fathers did.

There is just one group of Asiatics they tolerate here—the Chinese market-gardeners. These are to be found all over Australia; and in a land where hard manual toil is no longer the tradition, they work early and work late, asking no man’s pity. How green their gardens are! How well ordered their vegetable rotation! Many a time I have seen them watering far into the night. To their slovenly white neighbours, lolling round the public houses, they are just “bloody Chows”; yet each is a master of his craft, and if hard work comes first in the eyes of God, is heading for a garden in the Elysian Fields.

List to the annals of Wing Lee, of the Province of Canton, market gardener, who died in his shanty by the Victoria Bridge, Melbourne, and went straight to heaven. The words are spoken by the Recording Angel, who has led him by the hand to the foot of the Throne:

“He was a great gambler. At times his morals were unspeakable. Yet he was a master toiler all his life, who died worn out, his duty on earth far, far more than done. None worked like him. None grew vegetables so succulent. In his forty-three years of working life he grew over one million lettuces, one hundred and ten thousand cabbages, one hundred and fifty tons of tomatoes, forty-

eight tons of French beans, eighty-eight thousand heads of celery, seventy thousand bunches of shalots, and nineteen thousand vegetable marrows."

"Well done, thou good and faithful servant!" A voice, deep, sweet, unutterably soothing, has spoken. Wing Lee is terribly afraid; but for the support of the Recording Angel he would fall. His seat is with those on the Immediate Right Hand. Yet he does not comprehend. His tongue cleaves to the roof of his mouth and his half-paralysed lips murmur "Whaffor?"

The "bush" was Australia to me, not the cities. I had not forgotten that first landing on the North Shore; I recalled, as it had been yesterday, the drive to Lorne, the giant gum trees along the Glenelg, the wheeling of innumerable flights of parrots in the sun. Now, I had sailed on the Hawkesbury and on the Gippsland Lakes, had viewed the Blue Mountains and the Barron Falls, and the Western forests of Tasmania, and I had plucked the wild flowers on the ranges out from Perth.

September, the first month of spring, is a magic month in the bush. The nights are chill—in the South, indeed, they are cold—but they are placid, and the sun often comes bursting into a cloudless sky. In a moment the magpies break into their morning song, into cadences more liquid, more languishing than were ever played on a flute; for an hour now they will keep at their singing. The flights of rosellas begin to pass overhead, flying at a great speed, and calling sharply to each other; the richer hued lorries will soon be careering from tree to tree. It is cool and fresh in the forests; the gums are never crowded together, and the sunlight is playing freely upon their mottled, peeling trunks. Do not fail to crush the young leaves in your hand and sniff their fragrance. Here is a stretch, though, which will never mottle more; it has

been "ring-barked" by some selector. Beyond it lies his clearing, fenced with stout post and rail; charred stumps and ghostly trunks still stand in it, but already the green grass has sprung up thick and deep. Each little while the air is heavy with a strong and exquisite smell. It is the scent of the wattle blossom; a mother tree and many seedlings hang thick with their yellow flowers. Yonder stands the selector's hut; and on the grass near it, this September morning, peach trees are blossoming. Gaze your fill, for anything so pink, so ethereal, against the eucalyptus forest, you have never seen in your dreams; Sydney and Melbourne in all their glory were never arrayed like one of these.

Many an hour I lay under the gums and wattles. I read the Australian poets as I lay, and knew what the bush had meant to them. In the heat of the day I saw nature droop; in the cool darkness, when the Southern Cross hung low in the sky, I saw her most bounteously replenished.

"When night doth her glories  
Of starshine unfold,  
'Tis then that the stories  
Of bushland are told."

"How true!" cried I, lying in the dark under the gums; but I was my own story-teller. And as the sounds of the night came to me, one by one, so I murmured with "Banjo":

"Beyond all denials  
The stars in their glories,  
The breeze in the myalls,  
Are part of these stories.  
The waving of grasses  
The song of the river  
That sings as it passes  
For ever and ever" . . .

My work calling me, I passed on. And presently I found myself in the Andes in South America. The



mines there, lying mostly in Chile, Bolivia and Peru, have been worked from early Spanish times. Cerro de Pasco, in Peru, was worked for silver in 1630, and the mountain of Potosí, in Bolivia, greatest of all silver mines, as early as 1545. The chief metals in the Andean mines are silver, copper and tin. They carry almost no gold; the gold of the Incas, hoarded at Cuzco, seized so treacherously by Pizarro, almost certainly came from the alluvial gravels of Madre de Dios, far east of the mountains.

These minerals lie at great heights. In Chile, inspecting mines, I had to ascend to 8000 feet, in Bolivia to 16,000 feet, in Peru to 16,500 feet. Potosí lies at 16,000 feet. From its peak, you may see the cone of Chorolque far in the south, nearly 18,000 feet, rich in tin and bismuth, the highest mine in the world. Standing on the Morococha mountains, in Peru, I noted the deep staining of the rocks, the tremendous mineralisation, and could have located a hundred deposits of silver, copper, lead and zinc in a radius of ten miles. This was at 15,000 feet. On the horizon rose vast and yet higher ranges, resting under their deep, eternal snows; and I brooded on the immense wealth lying quite surely there, yet for ever unattainable.

These Andean mines lie far above the pleasant and beautiful places of the world. Not a tree, not a flower, hardly a blade of grass is seen. There is no comfort. Food is bad. Bleak winds sweep the mountains. The air is very thin, and one wakes in the night straining for breath. Pneumonia is prevalent, and always fatal, and the heart works under a heavy strain. By hard work alone, up here, shall a man save his soul.

Such are the conditions. And to such, from the flesh-pots of Egypt, two that I know returned. They owned a mine high up in Peru—a great mine, which their manager had run on the rocks. One was a rich man, an

American, one of those men who do things, and over sixty years old. He left his white villa in Nice, he left his young wife and family, and went. The other, an Englishman born in Chile, was badly hit. Retired, he was settled near Rugby, a hunting man, with a dozen horses in his stable. Selling all these with his estate, he sailed back to Callao. They knew their work, these two. The American went up to the mine, the hunting man ran the office down at Lima, and in three years they pulled things round. The copper market rose, and the future of the concern, now soundly worked, was assured. I stayed at the mine in those days. The old American, a man of great power, rose at five each morning, wrapped himself warmly, and went out in the dark to await the changing of the shifts. He worked long, intense hours; he had not left the mine for three years, and his labours now drew to a close. He showed me his family photographs, and already counted the weeks till his return to Nice. He was now very rich indeed. More than that, he had shown himself a big man. Then he went down with pneumonia, and in a night he was dead.

The mines of the Andes, all told, have yielded fabulous wealth. In the early days, the Kings of Spain received one-fifth the gold and silver. There is no doubt this royalty ran into hundreds of millions sterling, giving Spain the position she held so long in Europe. There is a man in Bolivia to-day whose tin mines clear an annual profit of six hundred thousand pounds. A few years ago, invoice clerk to an Antofagasta store, he drew his three pounds a week. There was an English surveyor I met in Oruro. He had lived there, at 13,000 feet, for twenty-eight years, working tin, and was about to retire with half a million. Stationed in Oruro, too, were a group of Scotsmen—Aberdeen fishermen at one time—whose collective profits in tin must now total a million

pounds. Fate has been capricious in these enrichings; at one end of the scale an invoice clerk, and sundry fishermen, and at the other, so it was whispered, his Majesty of Saxony, holding one-half of all Chorolque. But these prizes are not to be had for the asking. These remote Andean mines, like all sources of wealth, soon pass into the hands of the strong and resourceful; and once in these hands, there they stay.

My mining vow (and my retaining fees) took me to Siberia. From Vladivostock, on the Pacific Coast of Siberia, a railroad runs north to Khabarovsk, on the Amur River; it was midwinter there, and I recall how, lying back in my sledge, I drove out of Khabarovsk at a hand-gallop, bound for the gold mines. We travelled day and night, mostly on the river ice, stopping at some cosack post each third or fourth hour, to change horses. The country rose and fell in long swells—a frozen waste; hardly was it relieved by the forests of birch: their trunks were white as the snow itself, so that a ghostly filigree of bare branches floated in the air. The days were sunny, the long nights starry; and under the stars, one dead of night, I came near disaster. In the intensity of the cold, the Amur was now freezing from the bottom, up. Under so great pressure, water kept bursting the surface ice, lying upon it in lakes a foot or two deep, and forming, until frozen solid, a treacherous surface. On to such false ice, at a midnight, galloped my horses and sledge, and in a moment we had crashed through into two feet of water. There followed a bout of the fiercest lashing—without avail; the beasts could find no footing, the heavy sledge but settled itself the deeper. There we were, under the Siberian stars, ten miles from a post, at 20° below zero! In a few minutes the ice would form again. A little later, sledge and horses would be frozen solidly



in. We said not a word, but casting off our heavy furs, the cossack driver, my companion and myself stepped into the water. But most gingerly. Our felt boots reached above the knees; let the water, which lapped within an inch or two, but flow into the boots, and our own limbs were in jeopardy. And then we shoved. I know I shoved till the sweat rolled off, till the blood came in my eyes and nostrils; and all the time the cossack lashed and yelled, laying on terrible oaths with his whip. We were dead beat, horses and men, utterly done; the stars reeled overhead; I thought my eyeballs had burst; I knew our utmost strength had failed—and then the front ice held! With a groan, the heavy sledge slid up, and we were safe.

At the mines, reached after ten days and nights, there was a month's work. The gravel had to be tested. A series of pits were sunk into it, and to thaw each frozen pit, a foot at a time, the Koreans were set to build log fires. A stunted forest covered most of the country, all white now, and terribly lonely; to the nearest post office was five hundred miles, and to the railway, twelve hundred. But the task ended at last, and my sledge brought me back to it.

In course of time, still hard at work, I found myself on the Gold Coast, a country truly named. Gold was widely distributed there; but how to win it at a profit raised problems almost unsolvable. The West African Coast in this region is one great forest, stretching far into the interior. It is a land where the heat is intense, rains fall incessantly for months, and mosquitoes infect the blood with virulent malaria; where life is dreary, and all things tend to a lowering of the system.

The most capable men rarely went there. The men who did go often lived recklessly, many of them drinking to excess. The mines suffered, of course; but the greater damage was to the natives. Black and curly pated, they

were a most astute people. Gold stealers, malingerers by instinct, contact with Europeans had rounded them off in economic sophistication. Secretly hating the white man, and no longer respecting him, they were prepared, on their own terms, to take his pay; but a thousand natives, subtly undisciplined, failing day to day to render an honest day's work, would lop the profits from any mine.

In a hammock, slung upon the shoulders of four men, I was carried over the forest trails. It was a forest of giant trees in the main, reaching straight up for the sunlight; in the high branches a chattering and leaping of monkeys would break out, but the greater denizens, the chimpanzees and gorillas, never showed themselves. In a clearing would stand the huts of a village, plantains and yams growing around, and I seemed to read in the eyes of the villagers a lesser respect than I was used to. One midnight, outside Kumasi, I heard their drums beating, but I never entered the Ashanti capital. They will not fight us again with the sword, though. These tribes are learning English, and have been told all men are equal in God's sight; they prefer now to take their troubles into court.

In the Western States of America I spent memorable mining days. Good fortune led me to Colorado in October, the time of the Indian Summer. The city of Denver, and the surrounding prairie lie at 5000 feet, and in this buoyant yet balmy air one finds for a month or six weeks at this time climatic perfection. In the Colorado mountains were many gold mines, often lying above 10,000 feet high; railways ran into the valleys below, and I recall the long upward rides on horseback through pine woods, the timber line, the gradual stunting of all vegetation, and the barren slopes that merged into the snows.

Hundreds of miners were collected on these heights.

Foreigners to a man—Finns, Ruthenians, Slovaks and Italians—they worked skilfully, and received big pay. They earned on an average some \$3.50 for an eight-hour day, and for \$1.00 a day were warmly housed and superbly fed by the companies. Living as it were a monastic life, gorging red meat three times a day, their prevailing mood always seemed to me a moroseness; while toward the mine authorities they were hostile for choice. At one mine I visited there was a strike. The manager, a strong man, was warned in my presence his life was in danger, but refused to be coerced. Two days later he was shot, and died as they carried him down the mountain.

Besides the quartz mines, a new industry was now winning Californian gold. Modelled on the earlier New Zealand type, but improved mechanically, powerful dredges, floated on pontoons, dug and sluiced the old gravels worked by the miners of '49. Some of these areas, now covered by soil, were flourishing fruit orchards, but once their dredging value became known, prunes, pears and olives were sacrificed with no compunction at all.

I saw what was to be seen of mines from British Columbia down to Old Mexico. British Columbia, in those spacious Elizabethan days, was passing through her own gold boom. It came eventually to nothing, or almost nothing; but the Rossland goldfield, high on the slopes of the wooded mountains in Kootenay, looked just then to be very good indeed; a year later it had been bottomed. All sorts of small mines were being heralded in the colonial press, and I passed by lake and forest and mountain trail to view many a prospect.

A summer being come, I headed for Alaska. In 1867, for a paltry \$7,200,000, the United States bought this great land from Russia. It was to prove one of the finest purchases on record. Alaska's furs and timbers had been figured on at the time; but the widely spread mining

deposits of gold, copper and coal, since discovered, were an unexpected asset.

And there were the fisheries. Into the estuaries and creeks, at this season of the year, salmon were heading by the million. Canning factories, dotted along the coast, received the immense catches, and now worked day and night. They were manned by Japanese; whose appearance, bared to the waist and covered with blood, holding a long knife, beheading and deviscerating salmon as it were in rhythm, amid the steam and the stench and the dim light, was truly diabolic. Along the Southern Alaska coasts, forests, mountains, and glaciers blend in extreme grandeur, and the sea below them lies calm. For some hundreds of miles a chain of wooded islands runs parallel with the mainland. Now two miles wide, now no more than a hundred yards, this long channel was plain sailing by day; but at night there were no guiding lights from beginning to end. On moonless nights, the captain of the little steamer stood watch in hand, pulling ever and anon at the syren; and between a strict timing, and the echoes off the islands or the mainland, worked himself safely through.

I found myself at Skagway, point of entrance to the Far North. This Alaskan town lay at the end of a *fjord*. On the mountains above one saw the Chilkoot Pass, where, in preceding winters, hundreds of wayfarers to Klondyke had sunk lying in the snow.

The lately built White Pass Railroad, running out of Skagway, carried me across the mountains into Canadian territory, where it traversed a wide expanse of Arctic moorland. In the midst of this lay a chain of lakes, and the new goldfield of Atlin.

Riding out one day from Atlin, on a tour of the scattered alluvial mines, night overtook me, and I drew up at the only dwelling to be seen for miles around. The

traveller in these parts is entitled to expect a night's shelter; but when an elderly man threw open the door, welcomed me, and himself led my horse to the rude stable, I knew this was to be something more. I was cold and hungry. The old man and his son, living alone in this log cabin, cooked me a good supper, indicated the best bed in the shanty as mine for the night, and to my surprise produced some bed linen from a trunk, which they spread for me. But before we turned in, the fire was replenished with logs, and I sat for hours listening to a magnetic talker, and the tale of a strenuous life.

They were Americans from far off Minnesota. The father had been a notable flour miller, and at one time mayor of Minneapolis. Some turn in life's wheel, which I imagine to have been over-speculation in his own commodity, had brought him down in the world, and to Atlin in search of gold. There were those who would have called him a failure; yet to me he was of the best of the earth.

I returned to the railroad, and came to the terminus at White Horse, a settlement on Yukon River. From here to Klondyke was 500 miles, down stream, through a wilderness; shallow-draught steamers were sailing every day, and on the third day out of White Horse, I landed at Dawson City.

The Klondyke, sooner or later, was to disillusion most of those who went there. But at this time, before its capacity had yet been proved, men were pouring in, the population of the district numbered 20,000, money circulated, and the wooden town on the banks of Yukon thrived.

The gravel in the creeks and on the "benches" was rich enough. Indeed it was extremely rich, and in California or Australia would have yielded immense profit; but here, far, far beyond civilisation, where a man's wage was \$7 a day, stores a prohibitive price, and with no



natural water-power for sluicing, the economic factor was strained to the utmost. The gold lay mostly on the bedrock, under perhaps six feet of gravel. I saw wonderful ground cleaned up; but estimated the owners were losing by theft.

The different creeks of the Klondyke lay five to ten miles apart. Ranges of hills separated these, covered with a low forest of birch, spruce and juniper, and from the mossy ground sprang innumerable blueberries, here found in perfection. The distant shot of a hunter rang now and again through the autumn woods, but the bigger game of the region was already scared away.

A reasonably good meal at Dawson cost a dollar; and for a helping of turkey or chicken, brought up the Yukon in cold storage, one paid another fifty cents. Liquor, and the ladies, came a good deal higher; that is to say, an evening in a dancing saloon, with suitable liquid refreshment for self and partner, ran into big money. The saloon supplied both. On entering, one saw perhaps a dozen young women, American and Canadian, retained for dancing, and as the music struck up you chose your partner. A dance cost \$1. It lasted an absurdly short time. You then led the lady, or, if dilatory, were led by her, to a counter, where you paid another \$1, and beer was dispensed to both. The lady now received two cardboard tickets. These were "good-fors" or bonuses, one for the dance, one for the drink; they represented fifteen cents each, in cash, and she thrust them down the back of her stocking for safe custody.

One night, being enamoured of a good-looking girl, I was induced to dance to the extent of \$10, a like amount going, *pari passu*, for beer. As I did not drink beer, she quaffed my portions also, and it amazed me that her slender outline showed no sign of strain. What *did* swell



notably was the back of her leg, with bonus tickets. Could this be calf love?

The Yukon Territory had been duly constituted. A governor was sent up from Ottawa, and drafts of the North West Mounted Police kept law and order. A man had already been hanged in Dawson. Building a hut where the long winter trail crossed a lake, he was known to have shot several lonely travellers, robbed the bodies of their gold, and dropped them through a hole in the ice. Suspicion was fastened on him by the behaviour of a dog, the property of one of his victims. When his own turn came, this hardened criminal had to be dragged to the scaffold in a state of collapse.

I left the Klondyke in early October, when the nights already froze, and another week should see the closing of the river for winter. The forest-clad hills that lined the banks were now a deep yellow, and in their reflection the Yukon became a river of flowing gold. But when the sun had set, and the river lay in the black of night, this northern land became a chill and desolate waste.

## CHAPTER V

### AFRICAN SCENES

OF my mining work in Mexico, Russia, Burma, the Malay States, Hungary, Bohemia, Norway, Sweden and other countries there is no need to speak. But there came a day when my vow, made years before in the London hotel, was duly performed. I had been down almost every gold mine of note. My tally came to over five hundred mines, in thirty-eight countries; and I felt I had seen enough. I was still the right side of forty. But I had now made enough money to see me through, and when I put to myself the question "More money—or travel?" the answer "Travel!" was loud and determined.

I liked money, of course. But I was not a "hog." Having made enough, my "travel-chart" interested me more than my bank book; and that, having the choice, I chose the better part, I have not the faintest doubt. A distinguished American engineer said to me: "They tell me it's a pity you have gone out of business. But my idea is you are the wisest of us all."

So I quit: with a reasonable income, a deep experience, an impressionable mind—ready to absorb this World of Ours, and if I could, to fathom it. I was now—as every thinker must become—an agnostic. The more I saw, the less I understood. Such explanations as Gods and Miracles meant nothing to me at all. But I worshipped Nature. Life and Energy were my marvels, and the beauty and underlying horror of the World.

And how these spoke to me, I shall endeavour to tell.

First, the African threads must be gathered together. Of South Africa and West I have written. Those journeys into Morocco, Algeria, Tunis, Egypt, Sudan, Abyssinia and B.E.A. covering North, East and part of the Centre—will form this chapter. North Africa, where I am now heading, is all Mahomedan—countries of Moors and Arabs; and for that very reason I set out thither from Toledo, lying in the heart of Spain.

The Moors once held this town; and although driven from it eight centuries ago, their impress remains. In the Gothic Cathedral of Toledo, on the keyboard of an organ that can swell to shake the vast building, I heard played an air so delicate, so minor, so Mahomedan, that it seemed as if an Arab played on his pipe. Then, at Seville some days after, I stood by the banks of Guadalquivir. In a nearby wineshop, a gramophone reeled off the songs of Spain, and to me listening, those high, strained voices in the minor key, the quaver, and the halting rhythm, were the singing voices of Stamboul and Damascus over again. Spanish song is Mahomedan through and through.

The last seat of Moorish dominion in Spain was Granáda. The town lay under the hills, and the Alhambra—the Moorish King's palace—rose along the spur above. I do not know if this spur was all wooded with elms and beeches, whether the birds sang blithely, and water ran crystal-clear in the runnels then as to-day; but such was the bent of those old Moors that I feel these things must have been. Across a vale from the Alhambra rises the hill Albaicín, where some hundreds of families of gipsies make their home. Their caves are hollowed in the conglomerate, and the whitewashed fronts glint through a maze of prickly pear.

Westward from Granáda stretches a plain. On to this, in those Moorish days, there came marching at last a great Christian cavalcade. Isabella of Castile rode at its head, with Ferdinand; and having laid out on the plain the town of Santa Fé, that is still a town, they sat down to the investment of the last Moorish King. Here, too, came Christopher Columbus, seeking financial help from Isabella for a certain expedition; and here, after hesitation and delay, the contract between them was signed.

A few months later all was over. Granáda had capitulated. It went to the victors, and the Moors were to leave the country. The Jews were to go too. Spain was turning out her finest people—men who had brought to her soil fertility, to her schools learning, to her monuments beauty. It was the worst day's work in all her history. But little she cared. Holy Mother Church had triumphed, and these religious fanatics, obsessed, fell on each other's necks weeping for joy. All Europe rejoiced with them, and at London, by order of Henry VII, a *Te Deum* was sung in St. Paul's Cathedral.

I stood on that long spit of land whose point is Cadiz. A town of dazzling whiteness, rising to a bold headland, its fine harbour lay below, and across the bay rose up the Andalusian Coast. Cadiz was never a Moorish town. But from these cliffs, half hidden now in blossom of geranium, many an Arab had gazed his last on Spain; and thence descending, had hoisted his lateen, rounded the town's bold headland, and sailed away. Some went to the Yemen, and some to Bagdad. Others sailed to Egypt, and to Tripoli; and very many passed across to their satrapy of Morocco, that was now become a kingdom.

Had I been a Moor, cast out of Spain, I had settled at Marrakesh. In Southern Morocco, a hundred miles in-

land across the plain, this town lay, as it lies to-day, in a wide oasis of date palms and almonds and apricots. The Shireefs loved to dwell in Marrakesh. There they built palaces; there they were buried; the tombs of Sultan Mansour, and of his mother, all mosaics and coloured tiling, are among my great memories.

Here is the wide Marrakesh market place. These many men who come and go are Moors, Berbers and Jews; but their women are not abroad, or go heavily veiled. The lower-caste women who pass are Bedouin from the countryside; with their men, they have brought supplies into the city. These trains of mules and camels carry building stone and charcoal, and these many donkeys which pass are laden with barrels of fresh water, with forage, and crates of oranges. Here are shepherds, from the butchers' stalls, driving sheep and goats to the slaughter, and old women hawking live fowls, which hang head down from their skinny hands. On the returning donkeys, seated bareback over the buttocks, urchins are riding; and they wallop the brutes like anything, cursing them in the name of the Prophet, and of his daughter Fatima.

On the outskirts of Marrakesh, in the domain of the Sultan's palace, I ascended a kiosk, and came out on the flat roof. Below me spread a mile of verdure: olive trees, old and massy, orange trees hanging with their yellow fruit, and in their midst an artificial lake. The air was balmy, the sky cloudless, and as I raised my eyes, they lighted for the first time on the High Atlas, far in the South, all white with snow for a hundred miles.

Fez, Morocco's other capital, some hundreds of miles North, is a walled city. Viewed from the hills around, it lies there white and flat, with many minarets, and about it fruit orchards and spacious cemeteries. But enter. Pass through the quarter of the Jews, into the Mahome-



dan city of the Berbers and the Moors, and you will find Fez built steeply upon hillsides, many sunless labyrinths leading down to its twilight heart. Here, in lanes but a span wide, are the finest bazaars in Africa, craftsmen plying all the trades, a dense humanity; and here, too, are many mosques, thatched with green tiles, which you may not enter.

Mount to this roof, near the city's base; breathe the fresh air, and feel the warm March sun. Fez, the white, rises around you in tiers. Below you rushes a stream; this is the tanners' quarter, and in a thousand small cisterns around skins are being soaked and dyed. This is the heart of Fez, yet across the rushing stream lie orchards; oranges and lemons hang from the trees, apples are in blossom, and the apricots are full leafed. Many white egrets perch in the branches, and cranes, guarding their nests, stand upon high walls around. It is now four o'clock, and at the minarets they have just hoisted a triangular flag; as the chanting of the *muezzins* begins, a tanner, with many skins to be dried, claims my roof, and I descend.

But old Morocco passes away. France now occupies these stretches, building fine roads and bridges, and French motor-cars now traverse these plains. Numbers of Algerian-born French have crossed the frontier, mutual trade has sprung up with the Moors, and the relations between the two ameliorate.

The Spanish zone, where Morocco lies along the Mediterranean, is mostly mountainous, and less easily subdued. Upon a plain here, as I passed through, the people held their weekly fair; in this throng moved many of the Berber tribesmen, bitter haters of Spain, while in the mountains, a league away, men sat fingering their rifles. But this phase will quickly pass. Neither Moor nor Berber is again destined to govern in this land. Moreover,



they are keen traders, and they love the fleshpots of Europe; I see them soon reconciled to their fate.

Heading Eastward from Morocco, I enter the coastal belt of Algeria, where the French have been settled these many years. This sunny land yields good wine, and its people—the Kabyle, and the other tribesmen—forbidden the use of fermented liquor by Koranic precept, nevertheless work in the *gaiour* vineyards.

Behind this belt rise the uplands, of wooded expanses and green meadows, which bank the coast for some hundreds of miles. I had thought it to be a barren waste; but to drive by motor out of Algiers town in the late spring, to glide through the vineyards, to pass over the smooth French roads to these uplands, to pass through their forests, and among their meadows carpeted with wild flowers, is to write this tract down half a paradise.

Descending on an evening to the coast, to the old fortified town of Bougie, I felt a deep balm come into the air, while over land and sea lay the utmost peace. The road, these many miles back, had run under blossoming trees. Flowery meadows had lain without the town, and here, within its gates, the *bougainvillea* grew massy against each white wall. Fading away in the dusk, this suffered a purple reincarnation under the full moon, and at midnight it glowed—the only living thing on the Algerian shore. And as for the sea! Never had I seen the Mediterranean, never waters on earth, so silvery, so ethereal as on this night. The peace that was past understanding rested upon Bougie, and I lay down to sleep in an ecstasy of joy.

In the early morning I drove Eastward, between the vineyards and the sparkling sea; then turning inland, headed through the gloomy and fierce gorge of Chabat, and in the afternoon came out on the barren highlands. Here was the little walled town of Setif, an Arab town in

the main, where a *sheikh* was that day dead, and the women stood hooded and howling in the street.\*

Farther on, upon the barren highland, that was once a belt of waving wheat, a Roman city stands in ruins. Entering by the great gate, and treading a paved causeway, you passed the markets, the prison, the baths, the theatre, the palace of the governor and the dwellings of thousands of citizens. Mosaic floors, statuary, rich pilasters met the eye at every turn, and the French excavators were unearthing new things each day. This Tingad seemed as big as Pompeii, and in finer preservation; and spoke of imperial Rome in its zenith.

Returning to the coast, travelling still Eastward, you cross the frontier of Tunis, and come to the Bay of Carthage. On the bay's high headland lies Sidi-bou-Said, a white Arab village, whither, more than once, I have ascended in the hot afternoon sun, to lie on green grass and look out upon the world.

The bay beneath is very blue. It is a great semi-circle, and across from you, a white speck in the distance, is Korbous, a coast village of hot springs, in which the Arabs have lain for their rheumatism these two thousand years. Splendid mountains, rising inland, back the bay. From these, in days of antiquity, an aqueduct, on stone piers, brought in water to Carthage, and that famous city lay on the seashore below you, no more than a mile distant. Nothing of it now stands; but digging below the surface, you will come upon cellars, and mosaic floors, and all the débris of the one-time city, and you may buy this ancient site by the hectare and excavate Carthage to your heart's content. Here, too, an exquisite wine is grown—a Muscat de Carthage. In its bouquet there seemed to blend the intellect of Hannibal with the beauty

\* "Sheikh maat," cry the Arabs—"the chief is dead." Hence our "checkmate!"

of Queen Dido; and in nature's ceaseless cycle, who knows but that in this wine I quaffed her tears?

On the site of Carthage stands the monastery of the *Pères Blancs*, and beside it a lonely and garish cathedral. It is a memorial to a great missionary, and a great man—to Cardinal Lavigerie—who lies buried here; but I like best his statue in Biskra, gazing out over the desert, gazing with kingly eyes to the south, even as Cecil Rhodes, in far away Bulawayo, gazes north.

Ten miles away lies the city of Tunis, where the French have built themselves a fine town, yet have dispossessed neither Arab nor Jew from the ancient city of his fathers. Old Tunis is a city of the East, flat-roofed and dead white, surrounded by gardens, a very pleasant place in Islam.

A level road, which passes through vineyards, and olive groves, and fields of artichokes, and at last comes out on the waste of the hinterland, brings you in a hundred miles to Kairouan.

This is a sacred desert town. It is so sacred, that seven visits to it carry a saving grace equal to the *hadj*, and holy men throughout North Africa journey to it again and again. Here is a great mosque, whose many pillars come from the Roman temples which once dotted this land. It is a wonder in archæology, a source of subtle flattery to Islam, yet not the greatest glory of Kairouan. That is a small, outlying mosque, a thing of tile and mosaic, where they treasure a hair of the Prophet's beard. Men call it the "Barber's" Mosque, because the great epileptic's barber, who was his friend, lies buried here.

Once more we take to the waste, and after many miles there rises in the south an amphitheatre. It is El Djem, a very proper amphitheatre, fit to compare with the Coliseum at Rome. It stands boldly out, a landmark for

twenty miles; but the city which lay around it, and the wheat fields which fed its holiday crowds, have vanished.

I now sail Eastward, and after some hundreds of miles sight the lighthouse of Alexandria, rising from a low-lying shore. Here is a busy harbour, a city of commerce; and while the Arabs do the manual work, the men in financial control are the Greeks.

This delta of the Nile, this Egypt, is astonishing. No land quite so fertile, so closely irrigated, so responsive to watering, seems anywhere else to exist; and the crops of cotton, of maize, of alfalfa, of beans—some of which they reap three and four times in the year—are a delight to the eye. Here again are the Arabs. Only instead of in a white robe, they go here in a blue; but the facial types are the same; dark, haughty men, veiled women, donkey and camel trains, walloping urchins with their high-pitched objurgations, humble drawers of wood and water, beggars with their festering sores, are the stereotypes of all Islam.

Cairo, greatest town in Africa, lies at the head of the delta. It is built of the white limestone of the Mokattam Hills, long, low-lying ridges, which break the line of the Eastern desert. Mounting to the citadel, one sees spread out beneath congeries of mosques with their minarets, insignia of a living religion; while beyond the river Nile stands pyramid after pyramid, monuments of Kingdoms and of Gods long dead. There stands the Sphinx; here, the tombs of the Khalifs. That outlying block is the suburban palace of the Khedive. Beyond that, again, is Heliopolis, where ancients performed their sun-worship, and where moderns—Belgian and Greek financiers—laying out an elegant suburb, with a casino, sought unavailingly from the government a gambling license.

The Government! In the last resort, who should that

be but the British High Commissioner? And who, so long as water flows in the Suez Canal, and India is India, is it likely to be? One night, at the Khedivial Opera, they sang "Aida." Verdi wrote it for this house, for the opening of the Canal. It was dirt cheap at four thousand pounds. Had Ismail, the spendthrift, received like value for all his outgoings, *we* had never had our fingers in the pie. But this was our Jewish premier's chance, and he took it. Ismail was bankrupt, and Disraeli dealt with him for his canal shares, securing the control. It was a deal no less brilliant than Seward's, who had bought Alaska for the United States three years before. In my time, I have seen the canal doubled in width and deepened, and I have seen Egypt, under great Cromer, flourish exceedingly. We have nothing to be ashamed of here.

El Azhar, the chief mosque of Cairo, is given over to Sunnite theology, and some thousands of students sit about it on the ground, or outside in the courtyard. They give much heed to the learned elders who expound, and they sit droning, and memorising, and droning again through the livelong day. Some of these students are very old men; and in the hot, drowsy afternoons, when even the youths memorise with reluctance, I have seen them suddenly bend double over their book, and fall asleep.

But on the birthday of the Prophet, a festival which changes with the calendar, what a to-do! There was no sleep then. On the outskirts of Cairo many immense tents were set up, gaudy within in red, blue and yellow, and embroidered Koranic texts; and all sorts of men, ranging themselves in long rows which faced each other, danced for hours in religious ecstasy. They danced to pipes and drums, or to their own rhythmic singing; they swayed to and fro; they stamped, calling to God and



His Prophet; they burst into a sweat, their eyes glazed, their tongues lolled out, they saw the heavens open, and houris stretching out their plump and perfumed arms; one by one they fell reeling to the ground—and the places were taken on the instant by fresh and excited men.

As I stand gazing from the citadel of Cairo, the shadows lengthen, and for an hour now, until the sun sinks, a deep glamour lies over the desert. It lies over all this land. Steaming down the Canal, or out in the Gulf of Suez you will see it, and it falls every evening upon the desert mountains which fringe the Red Sea.

Above Cairo, that is to say to the south, Egypt, for all its great length, is no more than two miles wide—the Nile, between its ribbons of greenery, flowing through a waste of sand.

At a spot more than a thousand miles south, beyond all the cataracts, Arab sailing *dhow*s are drawn up by the river's bank, where are heaped piles of gum, for shipment, and a native town lies back of them. This is Omdurman, once the home of the Mahdi, then the place of his beheadal. Close by here the Nile branches—branches into "blue" water, and into muddy, which they call "white"; and but a mile or two along White Nile there stands Khartum.

This is the Sudan, where Britain works with a free hand, and where she will bring all that can be brought to fruition. In the main, Sudan is desert, yet fertile over large areas; there are dates and grain in the oases, while toward the Abyssinian highlands is a green country, with many cattle. The Greeks follow in our train here, snapping up the financial openings we make. Wholesale and retail, they are the merchants of Sudan. This land is too hot for our own people; but I could wish that our Indian



people might come here, rather than the Greeks, and grow prosperous in the days that are to come.

Leaving North Africa, I now sail down the Red Sea, to the East Coast. Steaming out of the Red Sea, into the Indian Ocean, and hugging the African shore, I presently enter a deep bay, and come to Djibouti. This is just a white town on a coral spit, set against the illimitable and slowly rising desert. In the foreground stands the house of the French Governor, set about with palms and oleanders, behind it the white buildings of the administration. There are hotels, with *cafés*, kept by Greeks, where the white suited officials and merchants take their meals, but in the main Djibouti is a town of Somalis and Arabs.

In the great heat of the day few move abroad; toward evening a breeze blows over the bay, the sun sets in vermillion and gold, and a twilight enchantment falls on desert and sea.

From Djibouti I set out for Harar, Southern Abyssinia.

Awaking at a dawn, I rose, and looked out upon the world. This garden, where my tent was pitched, lay at 6000 feet, in the Abyssinian highlands, and the air was very fresh. English flowers were growing, and in a hedge of the compound wild roses were in bloom. About the house grew pepper trees. Doves and orioles fluttered in their branches, where, delicately suspended, hung many nests.

The house, with its trees, a landmark upon the hillside, had belonged to Ras Makonnen, warrior and statesman, the nephew of Menelik. In a compound close by he now lay in his mausoleum. A circular building beside it, garishly painted, that might have been the pump

room of some provincial spa, was a church, where unwashed priests celebrated the rites of the Abyssinian faith. A mile away, in lower country, lay Harar, the old slave market, infamous once for a thousand miles around. That was in the Emirs' days; and Burton, coming there in 1855, was the first European to enter it. Now the Arabs have been driven from the region; their power is ended; their mosques razed; and here Abyssinians with their Christian churches are ruling the local tribes. But figs do not grow upon thistles, and I was to find that the brand of faith these people offered meant nothing at all. Five gates pierce Harar's crenelated walls. As in the Emirs' time, these are opened before the dawn, closed at dark, and are all day long centres of life and animation. Through the long lanes of euphorbia, winding among the coffee gardens, or crossing grassy uplands more remote, thin streams of traffic converge upon the gates. Many laden donkeys arrive. Those bearing building stone and charcoal pass quickly in. Those that carry skins of mead, or other native liquor, are held up by a customs guard; there is a muttered colloquy, a nod, the Abyssinian equivalent for a wink, and they too pass in. Some of the guard, their rifles laid aside, lie under a tree to smoke. Others cajole the market women who arrive, levying a toll; whether it be their *khat*-bundles of a green leaf that stimulates—their chilis, or their ground nuts, a tithe seems always to pertain to the guard. A woman of quality journeys forth, heavily veiled. A servant leads her white mule, another shades her with an umbrella, and three follow behind. Troops of low-class women carry in skins of water, returning again and again to the neighbouring brook; slave women in all but name, the married ones have yet bunched their hair into plump chignons. Others wash beside this brook, setting their clothes to dry upon grass that has been a Mahome-

dan graveyard. An Abyssinian notable approaches. He is heavily swathed in white cloth, and wears the wide-brimmed black felt hat. His feet are bare. His fine mule is caparisoned, and some nine riflemen or spearmen, stained with travel, walk in his train. As he reaches the gate, a dozen carriers of the city's refuse pass out. Beggars sit scratching their sores. Children and mangy puppies sprawl in the sun. Goats and cattle lie around. Nearby a man is skinning a dead camel, and a dozen dogs fight for the flesh. Vultures and kites hover above, swooping daringly at carrion, and there is, first and last, a shocking stench.

Harar is not a great town; and her bazaar is small. There is a fair regional trade passing in cattle and hides, in camels, in cotton, in millet and other grains, in rifles and ammunition, but it is not carried on under the public eye. The trade in cloth is in the hands of Banians—Bohra Mohamedans from Bombay. The liquor shops are kept by Greeks and Armenians. You will find here one product of excellence—coffee. Indigenous to this plateau, it is said to take its name from "Kafa," a district in the south. Possibly not inferior to "Mocha," grown in the Yemen of Arabia, it is often sold as such.

The chief currency of Abyssinia has been the Maria Theresa *thaler* of the year 1780. Obsolete in Europe for a century, quantities continue to be minted in Vienna, for Abyssinian use. These come from the original die, but their silver content is now reduced by alloy. Their absorption throughout the country is steady; and just how many millions have been buried by men now dead, who will never tell their secret, would doubtless stagger us. The silversmiths of Harar use many *thaler* up; sitting crosslegged in their little shops, with anvil, forge and blow-pipe, eternally chewing leaves of the stimulating *khat*, they work coarsely, catering for the lower classes;

but their silver mule trappings are for the rich. In their shops they burn an incense of a peculiar reek. I knew it at once; it is burned in the Abyssinian Church in Jerusalem.

The centre of the town is an open square. In the daytime this is a crowded spot, where I have counted wellnigh a thousand men—Gallas, Abyssinians with rifle or spear, Somalis, Arabs, Banians, Jews and Armenians; but the women do not venture here, or pass through quickly, with bowed heads.

As I stood in this crowd, taking stock of mounted men who had arrived with their retainers, there was sudden tumult, and armed police came hustling a man through the square, a rabble at their heels. He was struggling fiercely, and they pulled taut a cord about his neck, so that he became livid. They were coal black, and he was white, and as they dragged him through the crowded square I could have sunk with shame to the ground. It is true he was only a Greek, taken in a brawl, who had drawn his knife on the police; it is true the police were but doing their duty; but in the heart of Africa there should be no such scene as this.

On one side the square justice was administered daily. Here stood a high Arab wall, pierced by a barbaric gate, and beyond it an open courtyard, where, marshalled by the guard, stood a throng of men—all white sheetings and black woolly heads. In the centre sat the contending parties, with their witnesses. Above them sat the minor judges, or assessors, sedate black men in silk gowns, and on a dais among cushions, under a galvanised roof, sat the Governor of Harar. Three wooden crosses, painted yellow, stood out from the roof; but that the truth was spoken in this courtyard, and justice dealt out to all alike, you must not for one moment believe.

Christianity, even to the best of Abyssinians, is but

a Mumbo-jumbo—so much ritual, posturing, chanting and incense; its essence, which is of the brain, being entirely lost. Coming to them many centuries ago, through the Copts of Egypt, it found in the Abyssinians a barren soil, and has changed them not one jot or tittle since. One would almost claim these people, temperamentally, for Islam, with a mental reservation on behalf of Jewry. The lion is their emblem—the “Lion of the tribe of Judah.” With Arab and Nubian blood in their veins, they are yet markedly Jewish, and their theology and writings bear many references to the “lost tribes.” They are warriors to a man; and were England or France to try conclusions, three or four hundred thousand would quickly take the field. Flushed by their earlier victories over Italy, they might at first offer a strong resistance, but no organised or protracted one. To me, they are just degenerate Basutos. There seemed but one enlightened man in the Abyssinian nation—the Emperor Menelik, warrior, statesman, and reformer, who now lay paralysed in his capital of Addis Abeba. At Harar they daily awaited the news of his death; nor was it certain that his empire, the only unannexed land in Africa, would long survive him.

Farther down this East African Coast lies Mombassa, an old Arab town; and from Mombassa I took the Uganda Railway, passing six hundred miles through British East Africa, to the shores of Victoria Nyanza. The train ran all one day through low-lying bush, a hot, deadly belt, toward evening passing through a region famous for lions, at night ascending slowly to the uplands. By nightfall I was greatly excited. Dawn would find us nearly at the Athi Plains, 5000 feet high, the greatest wild animal region in the world.

I slept lightly, and was woken by the rushing of many



feet. By my watch it was just half past two; the night was dark and placid, the engine still panted up the long ascent. I had been dreaming.

Again I awoke from a dream, and again; but before the dawn, phantom shapes, galloping among the trees, became real, and a troop of *harte-beeste* went by. At daylight, all unconcerned, a herd of zebras stood forty yards from the train, and in the wooded background many animals went stealing. When the train came to the open plains, animals were to be counted by the thousand. Zebras and *harte-beeste* galloped in troops of fifty, and the smaller antelopes covered the plains like sheep. In the foreground, now the sun was high, Thompson's gazelles gambolled, and I could swear that some ostriches, half a mile away, were doing the same. No giraffe were seen that day, but in a dip of the plain trotted a rhinoceros.

Just beyond the plain, hardly out of shot of the animals, lay the town of Nairobi. It is located almost on the Equator, and lies 5000 feet high, in as well watered, wooded, and fertile a region as can be found in the tropics.

Far to the South, in German territory, rose the white peak of Kilimanjaro. South of Nairobi, too, across a green, rolling country, lay villages of the Masai, the warrior tribe of these parts. In the early mornings, their women, hardy and tireless, came in with sheep or goats for market, or bore on their heads calabashes of native beer; and later in the day, gaudy in their new cloth, a little drunk on imported liquor, a little more tarnished with civilisation, stepping out in single file, they took the long trail home.

A mile or two out was a forest, and in its depth a fairy-like glade. A stream of pure, cold water flowed here, birds sang in every tree, animals moved through the



undergrowth, and the air was strangely fresh. Here I used to lie in the afternoons, and not alone. Villages stood beside the forest—villages of the Wakikuyu, a slave race to the Masai, but now, since the coming of the British, freed. Each afternoon these people sought the glade, where, the men in one circle, the women in another, they sat beside the running water, talking and laughing for hours, while the children, utterly joyous, rioted over the green grass. It is true that they were black people, that they wore but a loin cloth, and were numbered with the "benighted heathen"; yet in this idyll of the African glade their happiness seemed to me divine.

Beside Lake Victoria Nyanza, on this Eastern shore, the native tribe was the Kavirondo, a small-skulled, statuesque people, smearing their bodies with cocoanut oil, and going, both men and women, stark naked. Like other tribes living about the lake, they were at this time being mown down by sleeping sickness. A crew of young men, taking me in their canoe, rowed across an arm of the lake, to where stood a row of galvanised shanties. This was the hospital, in charge of a Goanese doctor, and here were some forty patients in the deadly grip of the sickness. They ranged from grown men, to a chubby boy of eight, newly brought in, and they were inevitably doomed. Those in the last stages lay comatose beneath a blanket. The flesh was gone from their bodies, a parchment of skin covered their bones. From the less advanced cases, now and again rose groans of anguish, but mostly there was silence. On the mud banks, not far away, crocodiles sunned themselves. For them, at least, this sickness round the great lake brought its compensations.

Had I been a young curate, which, thank goodness! I was not, how would these sights have squared with my beliefs? These forty dying men were a mere nothing;

the estimate was that a million would die from the sickness. A million African babes born, suckled by their black mothers, grown to man's estate—for what? At the appointed time, placed there by the same power, a million microbes awaited each one, with the absolute certainty of doing him to death.

But a week or two before, on the tropic shore of the Indian Ocean, I watched a colony of land crabs. Their holes were in the sand, where they sat, their eyes far out of their heads, awaiting a prey; and I saw that each had been given one normal, and one large and powerful claw. Presently a smallish crab ventured too far from its hole. Inside of five seconds, a larger crab was out and upon it, had broken its shell—its backbone, as it were—with a crunch, and had dragged the quivering body into his hole. The small claw, I judged, could not have broken the shell; thus the reason for the large and powerful one was made clear. The sleeping microbe had only attacked man; the crab was fashioned to feed upon crabdom.

Everywhere, more often than not in a setting of exquisite beauty, I saw murder; life feeding upon life; millions born to become the food of millions more; man himself, the vaunted heir of the ages, held of no more account than a feather. It was all so crazy-like! So utterly unmeaning! You poor, fatuous clergy, with your "Ah! we must not question these things." If we must not question these things, why, in God's name, were we given our brains?

## CHAPTER VI

### THE PLAZA OF CARÁCAS

LET me tell now of journeys in South America.

I am sitting in the *Plaza* of Carácas, in Venezuela—sitting and thinking. My thoughts are of this vast South America, of her soul, of her history; and I realise how little I—how little any of us—know about her. In our language men write and write; there is making of books without end. Yet who, in our time, has written with true knowledge on four subjects I shall name: on the Spanish colonial days; the Revolution against Spain; the Dictators who have ruled in these republics; and the Roman Church in South America—than all of which there is nothing more absorbing in history.

At Seville, on Palm Sunday, 1493, a multitude stood beside the muddy and sluggish Guadalquivir, here just eighty yards wide; and presently, amid their shouts, Columbus came sailing up in his vessel, discoverer of the New World. That contract, signed by Isabella and himself on the Granáda plain, had borne a surprising fruit.

The first land he had sighted was an island which he named San Salvador. It was probably that one we call Watling Island, one of the Bahamas, low-lying, some twelve miles by six in area, situate just north of the tropics. Columbus did not sight the mainland until the third of his four voyages to America. His discoveries lay among the isles of the Caribbean, and that island he loved best, and called his own, was Hispaniola,

or Haiti. Here he built his capital, naming it Santo Domingo, and here he ruled awhile as viceroy; a post held by his son after his death.

Santo Domingo, first white settlement in the New World, thus became the forcing ground, the stepping-off place for nearly all the *conquistadores*. Velasquez, Conqueror of Cuba, sailed from here; Cortéz, who, staying a while in Cuba, passed on to the conquest of Mexico; Ponce de Leon, the discoverer of Florida; Balboa, an absconding debtor, hidden in a barrel, who made for Darien, and so to the first sighting of the Pacific; Francisco Pizarro, to soldier along the Main, and then to discover Peru; the christlike Las Casas, to labour among the Indians in Guatemala, and many more of lesser note. Not forgetting its founder, more famous men passed through Santo Domingo in those years than through any other spot in the world; and one must fix this little Haytian settlement in the mind as the true cradle of Latin America.

At a daybreak once, I sailed into the forest-girt bay of Santo Domingo. On a bluff headland stood a stout old fortress, rounding which the vessel entered a river, and tied up at a wharf. The land rose up from the river; and upon this Western bank, though but a meagre area against the surrounding forest, lay the capital of Columbus—the oldest city in the New World. Here, were the crenelated walls, many feet thick. Passing through the gateway, there stood facing me the stone palace of the viceroys, now a ruin, while on the rising ground beyond appeared the towers of many old churches.

Wandering in and out of these, and about the streets, now gaining a vista of the sea, and now of the illimitable forests I found among the people—who are half-castes of Indian and Spanish blood—a great commotion.

Revolution had broken out, and this very day a hostile force marched on the city. On the higher ground, where the old walls had gone, men were stretching barbed wire, and throwing up barricades of sandbags, whilst many of the poor, from beyond this periphery of safety, were crowding with their belongings into the churches. Wandering on, I presently came to the *plaza*. Here stood the cathedral, flanked by fine old trees; it looked low and gloomy, half church, half Moorish fort, brown and wizened—the first cathedral in America. A statue rose before it in the *plaza*. Columbus stands on this; in seaman's garb, he gazes afar, rapturously, as upon a New World. To the pedestal clings an Indian Princess, a leathern girdle about her, long feathers in her hair; she looks upward, and traces in archaic lettering the name of Colón. The figure of the statue is that of a young man, and the rapture on him young. Columbus when he sighted the West was middle-aged, weatherworn at that; but so charming is this grouping, so vivid the scene, I would not have had it otherwise.

To the cathedral attaches a strange story. The coffin of Columbus was brought to Santo Domingo for burial. It had lain in Valladolid, where he died, and in Seville, and now was sent, in terms of his last Will and Testament, to lie in his own capital; this being his fifth voyage to the West. And at the same time were sent the remains of his son, Don Diego, another viceroy of the island.

The coffins—those of father and son—were placed in the Cathedral; they are known to have lain, each, in several vaults. After a long period of time, in which the coffins must have rotted, the bones, and their dust, were placed in caskets and deposited in two small chambers under the flags, no more than three steps from the high altar.



In the year 1794 Spain ceded Santo Domingo to France. But that the bones of Columbus, founder of Spain's Empire, should rest under an alien flag, was unthinkable, and they were removed to Havana. Here they lay for over a century; then were taken back to Spain, where they once again repose in the Cathedral of Seville. But they took the wrong bones. They had opened the chamber of Don Diego. Workmen, repairing the cathedral in 1877, came upon the other chamber. Here lay a leaden casket, with the initials of Columbus upon it, and his titles. This was opened in the presence of the Archbishops, the Canon of the Cathedral, and several foreign consuls, who, raising the lid, read upon its inside the words "The illustrious and noble gentleman, Don Cristoval Colón." Among the bones and the dust lay a small silver plate, and again these credible witnesses read on it Columbus's name.

A Commission now arrived, sent by the Spanish Academy; the which, taking note of the bones that were Spain's, and of these new bones, that were not Spain's, but the property of the Dominican people, refused to credit them. Not so the Dominican people. Believing—and rightly believing, I think—the bones to be those of the great Colón, they took them from their chamber beside the high altar, and built for them, in the cathedral nave, a mausoleum of white marble.

Having had its day, Santo Domingo passed into the twilight, and the centre of gravity shifted to the mainland—to the coast of Darien. That absconding debtor and adventurer, Vasco Nuñez de Balboa, who escaped out of Santo Domingo to the Main in a barrel, so rehabilitated himself, that he became governor of Darien; and in the year 1513, at the head of an expedition, he set out to explore the interior. He was destined to make a great discovery. Standing one day on a low mountain



range, and gazing westward, he saw beneath him a new ocean.

“ . . . with eagle eyes  
He star’d at the Pacific—and all his men  
Look’d at each other with a wild surmise—  
Silent, upon a peak in Darien.”

Keats mistakenly writes of Cortés; but the hero of the Pacific was this Nuñez, who, descending to the shore, “rushed in waist deep, with drawn sword, proclaiming the discovery his own, in the name of God and for the glory of Spain.”

A spot farther up the coast was chosen as site of the town of Panama; and while Nuñez remained here in local control, the superior government of Darien passed into the hands of one Pedriarias. But as time went by, the presence of so famous a man in this small community became gall and wormwood to the Governor’s heart, who finally adjudged him contumacious, and placed him under arrest. Pedriarias’ agent in this act was no other than Francisco Pizarro, who in later years was to discover Peru. A charge of treason was preferred; and a few years after his great discovery, Nuñez de Balboa was beheaded.

In course of time Panama became a city of 7,000 houses, built beside the sea, round its splendid Cathedral of St. Anastasius, and the seat of the Spanish Viceroy. It was the gate to the South. From here Pizarro sailed. Here arrived, in later years, coming up from Arica and Lima, the wealth of Peru, the fabulous treasure of Potosi; and hence, over a paved highway across the isthmus, convoys of slaves carried the silver bars to Puerto Bello, and so to Cartagena, for shipment to Spain.

Panama was sacked by the buccaneer Morgan, who left it in ruins; and while a new Panama was built, five

miles to the north, and flourishes to this day, the old city was blotted out by the forest. That is, all but blotted out. I saw the belfry tower of St. Anastasius still standing, covered by creepers, and in the crannied walls of the Viceroy's palace orchids bloom. Of smaller ruins there are a dozen or so, and where forest meets shore there is vestige of the old sea wall. In the swampy ground, overhung with mangroves, I saw the vermilion land crab steal. Along the forest track at my feet a green ribbon stretched, and seemed interminable. It moved! It was alive! Millions of ants were carrying pieces of the juicy water leaf from the pools to some chosen spot in the forest. Out of the forest, on this afternoon, came no sound. The Pacific lay dead calm. Over Old Panama, and along the coast, there was only silence. But as twilight fell, the Americans, quarrying in the distant canal, lighted their fuses, and the day went down to reverberations as of far-away thunder.

At the other side of the world, on the West Coast of India, there flourished in this sixteenth century, Panama's prototype—Goa, the outpost of Portugal. Founded some years earlier than Panama, reaching a greater population, a greater fame, Goa likewise suffered an early death, and was blotted from off the earth. I stood in Old Panama, and the forest was round me. I stood in Goa, and where the Palace of the Inquisition had been, there were cocoanut groves. Great Spaniards were seen in Panama—Balboa, the Pizarros, Almagro and Orellana; and there were great Portuguese in Goa. Vasco da Gama, Camoens and Albuquerque were there, and Xavier, who was to become a saint, lived there and died. His coffin, of wrought silver, rests in Goa, and because of his fame there are six churches among the cocoanut trees, and houses for the clergy; but the Portu-

guese city of the East, like the Spanish city of the West, is swept clean away.

The Isthmus of Darien, or Panama, is as densely afforested as that other canalised Isthmus of Suez is stark desert. Recrossing it to the Atlantic side, and hugging the South American shore, you will come to the town of Cartagena, a jewel set beside the Caribbean Sea. So treacherous are the reefs here, that steamers seek a narrow channel to the westward, and approach her across a placid and tropical lagoon. Seen from afar, this town of the lagoons is not unlike that other—Venice. Out of a dim white cluster, mediæval and ecclesiastic, rise the domes of a cathedral, and the towers of many churches; like Venice, too, Cartagena rides as it were upon the water.

Farther along this coast, where it is now Venezuela, you come to the port of La Guayra. Behind La Guayra mountains rise, range upon range, and the train to the interior passes up through the densest verdure of the tropics. Beyond the first range, in a valley, yet at above three thousand feet, Carácas is lying. This old Spanish town, to-day the capital of Venezuela, is surrounded by gardens, and in these gardens, or rising above the walls of the *patios*, you will see such *bougainvillea* in bloom—mauve, purply carmine and brick red—as you have never seen. The gardens are what is best; but you will visit the Cathedral, at one side of the *plaza*, and the Executive Chamber at the other, with its pictures of the War of Independence, and of all the Dictators of Venezuela; and you will walk up above the town to the pantheon of Bolívar.

I am still sitting and thinking in the *plaza*. What do I, for all my travels, know of the beginnings of this town? What do I know of this immense Venezuela?

Sir Walter Raleigh knew more. He told Elizabeth that the fabled *El Dorado*, for which men sought all over South America, lay here, and when James was king, sailed four hundred miles up the Orinoco to find it. Fever, mutiny, and the hostile Indians foiled him; he returned to England, suffered imprisonment, and was eventually beheaded. His death was thought to lie at the instance of the King of Spain, whose colony he had invaded; but I will swear that the envenomed James, into whose expectant arms he had poured no treasure of *El Dorado*, himself decreed it.

Raleigh had been strangely on a right track. One hundred and fifty miles due south from that spot he reached on the Orinoco, there was a goldfield, and it is fair surmise he knew of this from the Indians. He never got there; but after the Indians had worked it many generations, the field was prospected by white men, and *El Calloa*, a "chimney" of quartz, was found, the richest gold mine in the history of South America. For years, during the '80s of last century, this mine produced £80,000 a month, and enriched, among others, the dictator Guzman Blanco, who left his mark on Venezuela.

The founding of Bogotá, which to-day is the capital of Colombia, came out of the search for *El Dorado*. The site was located by the *conquistador* Quesada, in 1537, who had sought out this remote Andean plateau with that intention. Hot on his heels followed two other expeditions to the plateau. The one, coming from the northeast, was headed by the German, Federmann; the other was that of Belalcazar, the capturer of Quito; and these leaders, so strangely meeting, had each sought that fabulous spot which Indian rumour located on these uplands.

An *El Dorado* of sorts they actually found! In the mountains behind Bogotá, at a two days' ride, lies the

lake Guatavita. To the Indians of those, and of earlier days, this was a sacred lake, the spot where kings were consecrated, where they first showed themselves to the people. All the people being assembled, the new king, together with the high priest, entered a boat; which put out on the lake. Presently the king was seen standing. Naked and glistening, he was covered in gold dust from head to foot, and the shout of "The Golden One! The Golden One!" went up. [Or, if spoken in Spanish, "*El Dorado!*"] The high priest was seen to be propitiating the lake with gold ornaments, and emeralds, and the populace, in an ecstasy of emotion, threw its own paltry treasures into the waters.

The tale of these strange rites was handed down, and pondered by not a few; until, in our own days, a company was formed on the London Stock Exchange, and the lake, lending itself easily to a drainage tunnel, was emptied. On the bottom a great depth of mud was revealed, which, quickly solidifying, thwarted the workers. With its gradual removal, a few rare treasures came to light—idols, golden reliquaries, some fine emeralds—but it was at last borne on the seekers that the fabled wealth which ought to have lined Guatavita was not there. After all, why should it have been? Chief priests were cunning men before those days. String was cheap. A turn of the wrist, a few hours' immersion, and the royal treasures were restored to their guardians by sundown.

Quesada, the founder of Bogotá, still searching for *El Dorado*, headed an expedition into the Amazonian forests when he was seventy. Ere he died, the city of the "Holy Faith" was a stronghold of the church, and destined to become, equally with Quito, the chief ecclesiastical centre in South America. On the summits of Guadeloup and Monserrate, the steep and gloomy hills



which lie behind Bogotá, chapels were built—high cairns to Mother Church; and the city itself, its many churches filled with holy pictures, with its powerful brotherhoods of the Franciscans, the Dominicans, the Jesuits, and their great monasteries, with its religious feasts, and its holy processions, was given over entirely to the Roman faith.

The mainland of South America was annexed by Spain in the first half of the 16th Century. By the beginning of the 19th Century, that is to say in less than three hundred years, the half-caste race which had come into being, backed by not a few of the Spanish colonists, decided that Spain's rule must cease.

The seeds of this revolution, which was to spread over the whole continent, were sown here in Carácas. Who knows but that they were sown in this *plaza* where I sit, and on just such a sunny afternoon? The first phase of Latin America centred round Santo Domingo; the second phase was to centre round this town on the mainland.

On the 24th July, 1783, there was born in Carácas, in the then vice-royalty of New Granáda, Simón Bolívar, scion of a noble Spanish family. As a young man he became a notable patriot; his money and influence being thrown on the scale in the life and death struggle then commencing against Spain. In course of time we find him a general, leader of the revolution in all New Granáda. During a lull in the warfare, he visited England, raising there money and volunteers. He took back with him a number of officers and men, veterans of the Peninsular War, and Spain's final overthrow in South America was more due to these trained British soldiers than history has recorded.

Bolívar was hardly a great general; yet he won battles at Carabobo and Boyacá, freeing the immense provinces



which became Venezuela and Colombia. And when his chief lieutenant, Sucre, an abler soldier, moving South, had won the more decisive field of Pichíncha, giving nationality to Ecuador, and the last and greatest fight at Ayacúcho, that drove the Spanish Viceroy out of Peru, all the North of the continent, and that in Bolívar's name, was freed.

Three years before Bolívar's birth, there was born in Argentina a greater than he. General San Martín,\* at first an officer in the army in Spain, becoming one of the revolutionary leaders, freed Argentina and Chili by a series of military exploits rarely equalled. In the year 1822, his work well-nigh complete, he travelled to Guayaquil to meet the victor of the North; and because he was a great man, acclaimed Bolívar as *Libertador*, yielding to him the glory and prestige for all time.

San Martín returned to Argentina, where he lived in poverty. Later, he went to England, and settled finally in Paris. A statue is raised to him at Boulogne, where he died.

Bolívar, riding hard over great distances; over the terrible trails between Carácas, Bogotá, Quito and Lima; now placing himself at the head of the armies; now sitting in the council chambers, continued his dazzling career of power. When Southern Peru was detached, forming a separate republic, his name—Bolivia—was given it, and for a month or two he assumed the presidency. Returning to Lima, he became for a time president of Peru, then, finally, president of Colombia, at the capital of Bogotá.

Quiet having settled on the land, the instability of the South American character was now seen. Bolívar, a

\*In pronouncing Spanish names note the accented syllable—thus: San Mar-teen, Bo-lee-var. Sucre is pronounced Su-cray; Flores, Flor-ez.

man of prescience, knowing these people unfit to govern themselves, became autocratic. But he was tired out, and tiredness is no attribute of a dictator. The vice-president, Santander, was very able, and behind him there seethed a mass of intrigue. So at length Bolívar, hounded, disillusioned, laid down the sceptre, and left Bogotá for ever.

There is a small land-locked harbour on the Colombian coast, and built round it the old town of Santa Marta. On an evening, I drove three miles out of Santa Marta, to the lonely *hacienda* of San Pedro Alejandrino, whither the most famous man born in South America retired, and where he very soon died. He was only 47, this Liberator. They said he died of phthisis, but if ever man died of a broken heart it was Bolívar.

For all Colombia cared, he might have died alone. But he was not quite alone. His faithful French doctor stood by his bed, and an English officer, one of his British Legion, served him to the end. His body, interred at Santa Marta, was at last brought here to Carácas, his birthplace, where it lies in a pantheon.

The man who died thus, discredited and disillusioned, has become the national hero. In the death chamber, and in the small chapel adjoining, I saw a hundred wreaths hanging, from the presidents and the peoples of all South America. In front of the *hacienda* there is a Bolívar monument; there is one in Santa Marta, and in every *plaza* in Colombia. The great grandsons of the men who hounded him from office assemble yearly at the *hacienda*, and they sob and cheer as the rhetoricians recite his glories. The fame of Bolívar, in all this South, is become greater than the man; but he was a patriot to the core, and could he but know the men who came after him, he would turn in his grave.

Sucre and Flores, Bolívar's chief generals, and like

him Venezuelan-born, played leading parts in the revolution. At Pichíncha, that volcano at whose base lies Quito, Sucre won a great victory. Passing south along the Andean plateau, and reaching the Peruvian highlands, he there dealt Spain the knock-out blow. When the country of Bolivia was formed, he took over the presidency of Bolívar, and the people renamed their capital of Chuquisaca after him. But they tired of him, as they would tire of the angel Gabriel, and Bolivia knew him no more. His wife, of the grandees of Spain, owned a great *hacienda* outside of Quito, and here Sucre settled down.

Ecuador, now become a State, had perpetuated the victor of Pichíncha on its silver dollar, still called a "sucre," and in the course of time was to set up his statue in every *plaza*. But Flores was the first president of Ecuador, and Flores was jealous as could be. I will not say he caused Sucre's death; but when Sucre, riding in a forest, was waylaid and assassinated, there was neither stir, nor hue and cry. The news was kept some time from the people, and his very burial place lost to knowledge.

Not so many years ago, a woman of Quito demanded £500 of the Government, swearing she knew where the remains of Sucre lay. Upon provisional payment, she brought forward a very ancient man, her father, who long ago in Quito had seen the corpse carried secretly into a convent, and thence to a grave in the convent's chapel. And when they dug, there lay a man's bones, and Sucre's hat, and through hat and skull a bullet hole, even as the assassins had shot him. So the bones were dug up, and they lay in *capella ardiente* at President Alfaro's house for a week; being then taken in solemn procession to the cathedral.

And so Spain passed from South America. The power

which had been hers was now to be wielded, mostly for selfish and ignoble ends, by the dictators, and by a horde of unprincipled politicians. But that other power, wielded by the Roman Church, and here built up to so astonishing a degree, was not to pass. On the whole, the Church in South America has held its sway over men's minds, whether they were Indian, *mestizo*, or pure-blooded Spaniards, and in spite of modernism, to the present day; in some of these republics it is more strongly entrenched than anywhere in the world.

## CHAPTER VII

### PACIFIC COAST AND ANDEAN PLATEAU

ON a January day I sailed out of Liverpool. Heading for the south, we crossed the Bay, coming in due course to Corunna, where, in the wintriness of Northern Spain, roses still bloomed over Sir John Moore's grave. We dropped down the Portuguese coast, past Lisbon, past Gibraltar; with Europe far in our wake, we coaled at the barren island of St. Vincent, and seeing no land for a week, came to the Equator. At daybreak then, as I looked from my porthole, a mount of forest verdure rose from out the sea—Fernando Noronha, Brazil's convict prison, and the island out-post of South America.

We steamed down the long Brazilian coast, and the coast of Uruguay, and the nights were again chill. We passed down the Argentine, into the waters of Patagonia; the winds were rising here, great seabirds skimmed the crested swell, and it was cold and bleak. At another daybreak, far, far in the south, we entered a bare firth, and steamed into a small inner loch.

It was Scotland—some harbour in the Hebrides! All around the loch stretched low-lying moors, with never a tree, and down beside the water stood a village of cut stone. At one end rose the manse, and upon the higher ground, by the side of the moor, were rows of shepherds' cottages. This land was not heathery, but one saw where the peat-beds lay; and the moors were dotted all about with sheep. Somewhere there was a flowering patch of gorse; it was a grey, grey morning; in the wind

which blew across the loch I heard the calling of whaups.

"Well! what do you think of Port Stanley?"

The second officer was speaking, and this wasn't Scotland at all, but the Falklands. This village of 800 people was the capital, and only town on the islands; the prim-looking manse was Government House.

And it was a sheep country. I could see that before I landed. The sheep on their wind-swept moors, their shepherds, the few owners—there was the thing in a nutshell. . . .

I found I was right. This *was* a sheep country. Excepting a diminutive fishing and whaling industry, established about the shores of the loch, the one business of these islands is their sheep. There is the wool, and there is the tallow—that is all; it does not even pay to fatten and freeze mutton. Fodder is scarce on the moorland, and the wild geese at times play havoc with the young grass. Not another sheep could the Falklands carry.

And hardly another man! With 3000 people and seven million sheep, these bleak islands—the most outlying in our empire—have reached a sort of economic finality.

The colonists are of a marked Scotch strain. The land owners have travelled, but the lower orders, as I saw them in the village street, looked uncouth, almost slow-witted. Yet from such as these the Islands' Savings Bank had gathered £55,000.

There is not a tree on these wind-swept islands. Gossip spoke of a tomato bush, three feet high, in the Governor's glasshouse, but this was not confirmed. On his front lawn, as I passed, the two convicts of the Falklands worked under the eye of an immensely fat warder. The three chatted pleasantly together.



These Falklands, lying remote from the South American coast, are seldom seen. I touched there only once; but that coast itself was to become well known to me. Especially was I drawn to Brazil, the land discovered by Vicente Pinzón. I recalled the discoloured waters, far out at sea, which led *conquistadores* to the mouths of the Amazon, even as they indicated my approach to Pará, near where ocean and river meet. Equatorial, embowered in flowering trees, a town of white-suited officials and merchants, consumptive half-castes, and negroes, Pará is *depôt* for all the river, 3500 miles long, and for its rubber, the staple of the Amazon watershed. In a public garden here was a collection of Amazonian *fauna*. Brilliant macaws—*araraquaras* in the Indian tongue—swung on their perches. Electric eels, gorged and lethargic, lay in a tank. These loathsome creatures, battenning on flesh, inhabit the slimy swamps of the interior; their prey may be a tired horse, some animal bogged in the mud, or even a man, whom they surround, and with repeated discharges finally stun. Gazelle and peccary were here in the garden, alligator and cayman, with many reptiles and snakes. In a wired enclosure a python lay coiled. Its bright eyes, ranging slowly round, rested ever and anon upon the other occupant—a fat duck, which at once pushed out upon the miniature lake. In the watches of that equatorial night, in Nature's dreadful routine, the duck's soul was to be required of it; when I went to the garden next day, the python lay alone in its enclosure, fast asleep.

To the honour of Vicente, it was fitting I should sail on the Amazon; and along a waterway two miles wide, banked by low-lying forest, in great heat, I journeyed five days up-river to Manaus, a thousand miles from the sea.

A vast river system radiates from upper Amazon.

Each year, after the rains, the waters come down in spate, flood the low-lying, adjacent forests, and deposit a rich muddy sediment. Under such conditions wild rubber trees thrive peculiarly; and when to these are added maturity of latex, and native methods of smoking and curing, the Amazonian product becomes the best in the market. This rubber supply is more or less limited to these flooded forests, and cannot be indefinitely expanded. Costs of production are heavy; but the world must have this fine product, and plantation rubber will not displace "hard Para" in the meantime.

Pernambuco, chief port of the sugar growing districts, and a great way south of Amazon, is a low-lying town behind a coral reef. Its crowded streets were strangely full of students—black-coated already, incipient lawyers, physicians and journalists—who would drift easily into politics.

Conceive this Brazilian race—half-castes of Portuguese and Indian blood, intermixed with a negroid strain from the early African slaves: conceive them as idealistic, gentle, polite, quite clever, and deeply musical, but because of the strain that is in their blood unstable as water, all for outward show, parasites, talkers rather than doers, lacking in character. Brazil is too magnificent a land for politics, yet the first flash of insight shows one there is hardly anything else. There are a federal, and twenty state governments, with a functionary at every turn. Brazil's development demands a race of supermen; yet fate handed her out these town-dwelling, office parasites, honeycombed with phthisis, who talk and talk, and play the piano charmingly, and despoil their states, and spin their web of the ideal. . . .

To be on deck at daybreak, as your steamer passes the sugarloaf heads, and enters the bay of Rio de Janeiro, is worth an all-night vigil. To view Corcovado's

peak through palms and bamboos, from the botanical gardens, is an ecstasy; and, climbing this peak, or Ti-juca, to look down through green forests on city and bay far below, is one of the great moments of life. Rio de Janeiro, modernised, pretentious, made for outward show like all things Brazilian, is raised by her surroundings to glory; her site, among the world's cities, is beyond compare.

Sailing across the wide bay, past wooded islands, I see before me, even as I saw from Corcovado, dense forests, and range upon mountain range. To-night I am headed to the lower hill-tops only; but these lie in forests so green and rich, in an air so cool, that I ask for nothing more. This is Petropolis, the summer capital; and the ascent from the bay, by cogwheel track, has again disclosed verdure's last word.

Rio de Janeiro lies barely in the tropics. On the uplands, in its immediate hinterland, there is cattle raising, and some gold mining, but the best lands of Brazil are not yet. As you travel south these appear. A night in a train brings you to a wonderful city. This is San Paulo; high-lying, but not far inland, the creation of Italians, Germans, British and Portuguese, and set picturesquely upon hills. Capital of a state, it is the city of coffee, centre of the world's greatest coffee area, built by coffee, sustained by coffee, growing fast through coffee—and a mediocre coffee at that.

Far in the interior, squeezed in behind Southern Brazil, is the republic of Paraguay. I had sailed a thousand miles up the Amazon, but from Montevideo to the little capital of Asunción, on the river Paraná, was even further. This, too, was a grazing land, wooded, in a fine climate, recovering slowly from the wars of Lopez, when the men of Paraguay, fighting in turn

Brazil, Uruguay, and Argentine, were well-nigh wiped out.

Land was cheap in Paraguay. They offered me a square league of the best for eight hundred pounds. And it was good value; for the Argentine railroads, heading north, would enhance it every year. A product of this remote little land is millions of oranges. On the river steamer, returning, the roof deck was loaded three feet deep with this fruit, for the markets of the River Plate.

All the Argentine, I found, was focussed on Buenos Ayres. Lying on the south bank of the Plate, this was a growing seaport, vastly wealthy, with over a million people. The Latin races, Greeks, Syrians—all the peoples of Southern Europe—were crowding in; the city's census already showed three hundred thousand Italians.

Beyond the city there was a treeless plain. But it was a plain six hundred miles wide, nearly two thousand miles long; it reached from Patagonia to the semi-tropical *chaco*, and grew fine crops or fed immense herds from end to end. This was one of the world's food belts, perhaps the greatest, and destined for a wonderful future. A network of railroads radiated from Buenos Ayres. They belonged to the British. Just a century ago the whole country might have been theirs; until a certain General Whitelocke, with three thousand men, was attacked in the capital by the dagoes, and put to rout.

The land now was mostly in the hands of the native-born. Its value near the capital was very great, decreasing as it neared the confines; and values continued to grow, making more and more men wealthy. Hence these shiploads of swarthy millionaires, sailing for Paris; these many Argentino owners, horse-racing at Belgrano for big stakes; these two opera houses, crowded

nightly; and these hundreds of ladies plastered with jewels, driving down the "Avenue of May."

Sailing south from Argentina, ploughing a heavy sea, my steamer entered the Straits of Magellan. Here I landed at Punta Arenas, Patagonia, the most southerly town in the world. A whaling industry is located here, and two mutton-freezing works; across the Straits, on the plains of Tierra del Fuego, an Anglo-Chilian company owns a million sheep. Sheep are opening these territories to the world. Argentinos, Chilenos, New Zealanders, Welshmen are making money to-day in Patagonia, and civilisation is creeping in. Westerly, the straits rise up on either hand, and I viewed the high peak of Sarmiento, white in the moonlight. A heavy swell again set us rocking and amid fog and rain we came out on the South Pacific. This was Southern Chile—all mountain and forest, and cold, drenching rain—and being a treacherous, unlighted coast, we stood far out to sea. For hundreds of miles northward, along this bleak coast, there is little settlement. But where the climate begins to relax, and the mountains have somewhat receded, a scattered population is penetrating. Farther north, again, the flourishing German colony of Valdivia is passed, the coal mines of Arauco and Lota, and we sail into the fine harbour of Talcahuano, where the Chilian Navy rides at anchor.

We are now come to Central Chile, a temperate clime, a land of mountain and valley, of big trees, of green grass and running water. The Spanish tongue only is heard, and here, half an hour inland, we arrive at the pleasant town of Concepción.

From Concepción the State railway runs through the main valley of Central Chile. This land, plenteously irrigated, is highly fertile. The farmhouses, red-tiled, lie



in their trees; maize, wheat, potatoes, pumpkins, tobacco, grow in profusion, and herds of plump stock or horses cover the pasture land. Further north there are the vineyards, producing good wine, and the great fruit orchards; by wayside stations, for shipment to the capital, lay water-melons by the hundred thousand.

Santiago, capital of Chile, is a city on a plain. It lies at many leagues from the mountains; but on fine days, looking eastward, you will see them, white-capped and very clear. The city must have a population of four hundred thousand. There are several fine streets, the Alameda with its old trees, and the quarter of the well-to-do; but the masses are seen to be poverty-stricken, their dwellings wretched.

Reach down an Atlas, if you would understand the poverty of the Chilians. Their country, over two thousands miles in length, is a mere ribbon along the Pacific, and one half but barren mountains. The South we saw to be mountainous forest; the North, for hundreds of leagues, is sheer mountainous desert. There remains this Centre, well watered, fertile—yet an area of just so many square miles, of just so many landowners in possession, and of a thriftless, owningless, proletariat, breeding fast. It is the problem of Europe over again.

A train journey of four hours brings you to Valparaiso. A slight bay marks this busy seaport, in whose open roadstead considerable shipping always rides. Rough weather is the exception in Valparaiso Bay; and if you anchor far out, you will see on a fine day Aconcagua, highest point in all America. So abruptly do steep hills rise behind the bay, that Valparaiso, lying between the hills and the shore, is a city of length without breadth. The town overflowing, houses have clustered on the lower slopes of this amphi-



theatre; yet the vista of this most British of the South American ports is grimy and utilitarian.

At two days' steaming north of Valparaiso, we enter into a new world—into a new setting of the primeval elements, sea and land. This is a region:

“Where falls not rain, or hail, or any snow,  
Nor ever wind blows loudly . . .”

This is the desert of Northern Chile, brown and utterly barren, rising ever up to the Andes. The very sea, become lustreless as the dry land, has sunk to a slow, grey swell.

It has not rained along this coast in the memory of man. There has not fallen an inch of rain in fifty—not in a hundred years. It probably has not rained heavily here since Almagro and Valdivia surveyed this land, not since the Inca first became its overlord, and who shall say for how many æons before that? Rain clouds form in the interior, only to precipitate upon the high Andes, and to float out dry and sterile over the western sky.

Yet a rainless land hath its pearls! Copper carbonates are exposed in all these mountains; borax lakes and nitrate layers lie upon the immense uplands.

I am aboard a coastal steamer now. We lie anchored off a small town—an abortion of *adobe*, whitewash, and galvanised roofing. There is no harbour—there *are* no harbours along this coast—and we rock slowly on the long swell. Beside fore and aft hatches the steam winches are working; as the swell rises to the vessel, they rattle furiously, and amid a shouting of the stevedores, crates, casks and ironware from Europe are dumped heavily into the lighters. We are taking on board ore in sacks, and copper ingots; noting which, I range my eyes

over the rising desert and see where a railroad winds down from a mining field in the Andes. It is midday now. The winches are silent. The hard-worked men in the lighters make a hearty meal. Seaward it is calm and grey, and I count nigh on a hundred great birds flying low to the northward.

But I would not live in this land. . . .

Now we have passed Antofagasta, and are steaming for Iquique. We verge on the tropics. The Humboldt current, flowing up from the Antarctic, keeps the air strangely cool. But the land, more than ever barren, has now, in the rarer atmosphere, assumed the utmost grandeur. Endless mountains are visible, chain above chain. The panorama, starkly bare, ranges over thirty leagues—a vast chiaroscuro: wherein the nearby colours, brick-red and lake, recede to brown, to violet, to the faintest blue, and to a mere phantom outline that is the eternal snow.

As we steam along, the general contour is broken by ranges rising precipitously from the water's edge. One such, a thousand feet high, lies abeam at this moment. A tiny settlement clusters at its base; and at a stone's throw, twelve full-rigged ships, hardly visible against the beetling cliffs, ride at anchor.

This is the nitrate country, that Chile wrested from Bolivia and Peru a generation ago. These ships are loading for Europe. They have mostly come over from Australia, with coal, and there are eighty in the nitrate ports to-day. Along these uplands, for some hundreds of miles, extraction of saltpetre from the desert sands is a big industry. And a rich one. Chile, drawing increasing millions from the nitrate export tax, sets herself to grandiose squanderings; while in the council chambers of Lima the dispossessed Peruvians mutter ominously.

Out seaward, along this coast, great birds are flying by the thousand. For the last two days all have flown north, with an air of purpose and of mystery.

Verdure does not creep back into this land until far up the coast of Peru. A spasmodic verdure at that: not of rain, (this is a rainless coast for many a league yet) but of irrigation from Andean streams—green valleys among barren strands. Here is the port of Callao, with its sheltered roadstead, an ugly entrance into Peru; at three leagues inland, across the rising plain, there are seen the church towers of Lima.

The "City of the Kings," so long the seat of the Spanish viceroys, is set well out from the mountains. The bawling Rimac cuts it apart, whose waters have made all the nearby lands fertile, and have raised about the outskirts these avenues of old trees.

On this day of which I write, there was trouble in the city. The government, not getting its way in a matter, was at odds with the populace. Cavalry patrolled the streets, and a number of men were shot down. On the *plaza*, the centre of the town, it was still as death, and looking up, I saw that army riflemen had been placed on the flat roof of the cathedral, between the two domes. In the stillness, as they stood on the parapet against the sky, I saw again the twelve apostles on St. John Lateran.

Crossing to the cathedral, and ascending the broad steps, I entered. Unmindful of all political strife, of the worldly hopes and fears of men without, the Roman Church was going unwearied on her way. A service was taking place. The clergy, fully robed, sat in their stalls, the organ swelled, and the voices of the choristers, men and boys, rose in a Gregorian chant.

There were but two worshippers in that great church, two veiled, kneeling figures, and outside was strife. Yet

never, I think—not for great papal legates in scarlet, not for viceroys in their cloth of gold—never did intonings more rich and sweet vibrate along those aisles.

Two, did I say? There was a third—and he in direst need. In his glass coffin, all shrunken, lay Pizarro; so foul an Inca's murder rests on his soul, that a thousand masses will not wash it clean.

Close behind Lima rises the solitary hill of San Cristobal, on whose summit, a beacon for all the city, an iron cross, ten metres high, has stood these many years. Science, in the shape of German electricians, came in the last months, and placed upon San Cristobal an erection of one hundred metres—strangely cruciform, a very beacon indeed! This is the station for the new telegraphy, one of the finest in the world, carrying over the Andes to the far interior; by which, for the sum of five pence a word, you may reach Iquitos on the Amazon, a thousand miles away.

Mark well these crosses, placed in so strange conjunction on San Cristobal's summit! As symbols, they stand for much that lies in men's minds. They stand (shall we crystallise it?) for a virgin birth, against a wireless message—for the old supernatural against the new. To an ancient Syrian the first of these was believable; the second not at all. And to a thinking European of these days . . . who shall say?

The long coast of Peru, north of Callao, is a coast of shabby little ports, and much barrenness; yet likewise of oases, where cotton and rice are grown, and the finest sugar. Many Chinese were once brought to these sugar fields, who, their indentures ended, remained in the country, married Peruvian or Indian women, and produced a half-caste in whom each parent is clearly marked. Of this new brand in pedigrees—"From China

to Peru"—there may now exist forty thousand. The men seemed to me altogether inferior; the maidens, stepping demure in the *mantillas* of their mother's race, often physically fine.

Where the coast was sterile, one yet saw at times a fertile hinterland, or occasional small town lying in the interior among trees. Such a town is Truxillo, founded very early by Pizarro, set upon an upland at several miles from the sea. From the sea, Truxillo is a cluster of white Spanish churches; it merges seemingly into cane fields and a green valley coming out of the mountains.

Watching this so romantic spot through glasses, I have seen a goodly company making for Truxillo of a morning—setting out from the port, from adjacent irrigated farms, or crossing the nearby desert country. There would be a waggon or two, a train of laden mules, a cavalcade of *caballeros* in *ponchos*, wide hats, and fantastic saddlery; and a nondescript traffic of *peones*, of mounted priests, of women riding donkeys, and of graziers taking in cattle.

As I watched,

"Sometimes a troop of damsels glad,  
An abbot on an ambling pad,  
Sometimes a curly shepherd lad,"

rode across the field of vision, and it was my quaint conceit that morning to imagine that Truxillo had become Camelot.

Yesterday we passed the guano islands, white with the droppings of countless birds. To-day we lay off a port loading sugar, and to seaward, for nearly the whole day long, birds flew past. They went always North. Hour after hour, flying very low, they came up in unending phalanx, in lines two hundred strong. There were gulls,



quick flights of divers and black ducks—as it might be a skirmishing cavalry—but the great body of that host were large grey pelicans, sweeping forward, making for the far horizon with utmost deliberation. By moderate count, several million great birds swept past that day; and I imagined that the last great auk was dead, down in Patagonia, and that these unnumbered squadrons bore it to a grave in the deep, equatorial sea.

It is certain that instinct guided them. Somewhere to the north a food supply had been signalled. Somewhere, sick with fear—between these highly adapted, cruel pelicans' beaks in the shallows, and the lightning darts of marine monsters farther out: between the devil and the deep sea—a hundred million little fishes awaited their destiny. Somewhere, very soon, the calm waters of the Pacific would come all a-sparkle, and a myriad of silvery little lives would go suddenly out.\*

Now we are lying off Payta, the last town on this long, long barren coast. For the last time, through a weary day, we roll to and fro; for the last time the winches rattle, and the lighters rise up to meet their loads. Northward, the desert still stretches out; but this is near to the equator, and nature is about to burst through in a flood of vegetation. The Humboldt current, with its cool air has gone, and a great heat lies over the sea. A few leagues more, and we are opposite Mount Chimborazo and the forests of Ecuador.

When I first sailed along this Pacific Coast, or lay idly before the ports, my eyes strayed to the high Andes, my thoughts to the countries lying beyond their peaks.

There is a vast plateau up there. Beginning in the South of Bolivia, extending through Peru, into Ecuador,

\* On the next day, I saw millions of pelicans diving, and coming up with fish in their beaks. The wriggling of the fish in the sun, over several square miles, set the sea sparkling like silver.

it is certainly fifteen hundred miles long; thinning out at times to no material width, yet attaining in places a breadth of a hundred miles, two hundred, or even more. You must not think of this plateau as a great plain. Plains there certainly are, which you shall not cross in four days' riding; but I would have you imagine an immensely elevated region, rolling, yet much broken, a cyclopean breathing ground, whence the great peaks, invigorated to a final effort, shot up into a region of eternal snow.

The plateau averages not less than twelve thousand feet high. In Bolivia it is thirteen thousand, in Peru hardly less; only in Ecuador, beginning to tail away, does it fall to below ten thousand feet. Of the five railroads which wind up to it from the coast, four have carried me thither; and I have ridden horseback up there for hundreds of leagues.

The plateau, in the tropics though it be, is a wind-swept, treeless region. The days are mostly bright and sunny; the nights often misty, and bitterly cold. In the south there is frequent snow, and one is rarely out of sight of snow peaks. The air is very thin; I have lived up there for months, and stood it well, but a weak heart would quickly collapse.

The plateau has played its part in history. The Incas were plateau men; the dwellers in the low countries became their tributaries. Cuzco, their capital, lay at eleven thousand feet. Their great shrine of Tiahuanuco, whose monoliths still stand, and the temple of the Sun on Lake Titicaca, were higher still. Potosí, the mountain of silver, whose riches set Spain at the head of Christendom, lies up here. In the war of the revolution there were fierce battles upon the plateau. From far distant Pichíncha, Sucre came hastening, who routed the Spaniards at Junín, a field thirteen thousand feet high,

and at Ayacúcho, farther to the south, inflicted the *coup de grâce*.

At big distances apart, there are towns. La Paz lies here, in a deep ravine, and Quito, at nine thousand feet, is an outpost at the northern end. But the *mestizo* population is small, and outside of the mining camps are few Europeans.

Of the Indians—Quichuas and Aymarás—there are some millions on the plateau; their villages, mere sordid groups of hovels, radiate discomfort and ooze filth. They dwell, too, about the outskirts of the town, and must be accounted, hygienically, the vilest citizens of the New World. They can become skilful miners, fair mechanics; but as agriculturists have had little chance. They gather a potato crop from the poor soil, but in the south their wretched patches of barley do not even ripen. They graze sheep for flesh, and raise the guanuco and the alpaca for their wool. For fuel, they use llama dung, or the sponge-like *yareta* root; there is blinding smoke for the eyes in their hovels, but no warmth. As carriers, their llamas are seen everywhere on the plateau. I seem to remember the men always marching ahead, while the women, winding on their spools, follow the animals. Both sexes, except at the festivals, go in home-woven garments of wool, with bare feet. The men, especially in the north, affect a Panama of coarse make, which gives to them, when they roll in liquor, quite a jauntiness; the finest of these hats are made at Manabí, on the Ecuador coast, and seldom reach the highlands.

As cooks, they have a glimmering. From the Spaniards they learned to prepare a savoury vegetable soup, but garlic and other horrible herbs make their meat uneatable. At Poopó, in Bolivia, a group of Indian women sit at the station selling bread, and when the train stops, well-nourished white men jump out and begin to eat it.

This is surely the best bread I have tasted. The secret I do not know; but I have seen the wild ducks on Lake Poopó, and have been told the women mix the white of duck eggs insidiously in the dough.

The outstanding trait is their filth. They are born in filth, and in it they die. They wash rarely, if ever, and their bodies become hosts for vermin. As I stood before the Cathedral of Quito, on a Saint's day, two Indian women sat on the steps; oblivious of the crowd that came and went, they searched each other's heads minutely for lice.

These plateau Indians are mild and easily handled. They are a peaceful and long-suffering race; it is only when crossed with Spanish blood they become cruel. They are a race of drunkards, both men and women being given up at times to terrible debauch; but it is the debauch of the mild, not of the vicious. A highly emotional, deeply superstitious race, the ritual of the Roman Church was destined to capture them. Not at first. The Church signalised her entrance to the Andes by palliation of the Inca's death at the hands of Pizarro; installing, then, the Holy Office, she reigned for many years by torture, by the flaying of this people's very soul.

Methods of salvation more suave at last began to prevail, and the Indians, broken and adaptable, were reached through their emotions. The music, the incense, the genuflexions, the processions on Saints' days, and all the assiduous arts of the Church, won them at last irrevocably to Rome.

Night in the small Indian towns of the plateau—in such towns as Potosí, Challapata, Junín, Cerro de Pasco, or Riobamba—is strange and mysterious. Soon after nightfall it has become intensely dark. Heavy clouds flit by, it is bitterly cold, and there is expectation of thick mist before morning. The Indians who steal past



are seen to be shrouded in their *ponchos*, and no women are abroad. Once, coming out of the mist, I saw a belated herd of llamas pass. For a moment, a wizened camel-face was thrust in mine, then, with shuffling, and with little coughs, they were gone. In the remoter streets the houses, opening on their *patios*, present long, bare walls. Here in the darkness, for an infinite time, there will be no sound, but of a sudden there will come a knock, the bark of a dog, a voice at a grating, then a door will open, and close, and the night sink again to stillness. A dim light is burning, shaded over. It is a candle before a stone crucifix. In the shadows behind, steps lead up to an old church, to a door all clamped with steel. A figure looms, and the night watchman goes past; he blows a low melancholy whistle, and over a vast distance there comes another.

This is the roof of the world, and the mystery of its night is upon you. I have passed through other eerie nights, yet they were not as this. Things here are not what they seem. . . .

Now I have grasped it! These Indians, these half-castes—do you think they have forgotten? Their Inca, the King Atahualpa, went first. That long and awful roll followed. Those shrieks of agony! Ovens heated to redness! Instruments of iron that crushed the bones! Do you think they have forgotten? This fearfulness, this deep stillness, these shrouded figures stealing by—they are remembering! It is a dread expectancy, a stillness of fear: as if, on the tolling of a bell at midnight, the doors of churches should open in a blaze of light—open on the *Inquisition*, in its robes and masks, sitting as it sat three hundred years ago, with the Inquisitor, the assessors, the suborned witnesses, the tortures, and all the paraphernalia of horror and of death.



## CHAPTER VIII

### ECUADOR AND COLOMBIA

THE wooded island of Puná lies athwart the broad mouth of Guayas River. At a spot over against the mainland, in a clearing, Ecuador's flag floats over some shanties; and when the steamer's syren has reverberated through the forests, a richly dressed official puts off in a rowing boat. This is the quarantine station. Tropical forests line the river's banks; as you ascend, these open out into parklike expanses, where cattle graze, and cocoa, maize, and fruit grow in the native clearings. And presently, upon the north bank, there is the town of Guayaquil—a town of painted wood, South Italian to the eye, with some show of river craft, and animated water front.

Beyond the town lie low, wooded hills. From their summit, in the cool of the day, I gazed over these green lowlands of Ecuador, over the distant swamps, and the forests, and the river, winding silvery in the setting sun. At nightfall, on the in-tide, Indians, who had traded that day in the town, put out in their canoes, making for their distant villages. I watched them paddling with a slow and measured rhythm, heading for the interior; and even as I watched they became grey, and were absorbed into the vastness of the night.

The Guayas is a tidal river, and when the tide goes out, Quayaquil's secret is laid bare. For a mile along the water front, dumped there by generations of her people, lies the filth of a century, added to daily by the sewers, and by all the garbage and offal of the town.

As the hot sun strikes down, nameless smells, thick as syrup, rise from the slime, and mingle with the buzz of countless flies; while dogs are nosing, rats feed openly, and a myriad small land crabs suck in their gruesome sustenance, or struggle fiercely together. On this ooze, at low tide, Indian canoes rest, laden with cocoa beans or piled with luscious fruits; their owners lie in them fast asleep. The secret of Guayaquil is yellow fever. In the rains the *stegomyia* mosquito breeds, hovers awhile over the cloaca by the river, then strikes. "Lord, is it I?" cry the strangers within the gates, for many of them will now sicken and die; and ere they die they rot.

In the last rains, ending but a few weeks ago, there was a revolution here. The president of Ecuador died of a heart trouble, and one Montero, general in command of Guayaquil, proclaimed himself. He lasted just a month. The Government at Quito sent its troops down, who fought four battles; but before they were ended, those men from the plateau, and these lowlanders they fought, were dying like flies. The Ecuadorians are fighters; but this time they admitted to a bellyful. Men fought to their waists in the swamps, where malaria awaited them—and the snakes; they died of yellow fever on the troop trains, and were thrown from the windows; a thousand were killed in one battle, and the wounded, crawling with maggots, lay helpless over the steaming land. Montero, taken at last, lay in Guayaquil prison. Anticipating any verdict of court-martial, a rabble broke in, cut his throat, beat in his brains, and dragged a naked and swollen corpse to the steps of the cathedral. For safer custody, five other rebel leaders were sent to Quito, where, on a February afternoon in this year of grace, 1912, they suffered a like fate, with the added contumely of burning.

Pondering these horrors as I walked, I came to the

cemetery of Guayaquil, lying beyond the outskirts of the town, at the base of those low, wooded hills. It was early afternoon; the sun shone hot, and being drowsy I curled myself on a seat. In this cemetery, the coffins of the rich are cemented into raised niches, and the graves of the poor lie scattered over the slopes beyond, where the primeval "bush" still grows.

From contemplation of a site so unusual, my eye rested on the cemetery fence, and passed to a house that stood by itself at a short distance beyond—a galvanised iron house of one storey, painted grey, that had no windows, but an open grating just under the roof. As I noted these things, four well-dressed men, of the professional type, came out of the house and walked away towards Guayaquil, and I dropped asleep on my seat.

I may have slept twenty minutes. My waking eyes rested on the bushy slopes, where a tree had blossomed in masses of pink, and I gave my casting vote for the poor people's graves. Some peons had worked near me, but they were gone now, and I realised that all the workers in the cemetery had disappeared. And then I saw them crowded together on a water tank. It rested beside the grey house, and their heads, as they stood on it, reached the open grating that ran under the roof.

Twelve men stood on the water tank, peering through the grating. I think it was twelve, but I was drowsy. . . . I looked at the house once more. As I looked, a boy ran out holding his nose, and then I slowly closed my eyes.

Down the cemetery's centre path are grouped preposterous busts of the rich dead, and it was these I next remember to have observed.

"Gentlemen," I apostrophised them, "*negociantes, abogados* and what not of Guayaquil!—the grave is the great leveller. You lived. I figure you, knowing your

tribe, as mean and petty, corrupt even, up to the tricks of your trade, and so becoming, in course of time, 'leading citizens.' You died. You were rushed out here within six hours. Your ledger account was closed. At best you deserved oblivion; yet your next-of-kin, with a licence outraging art and nature, perpetuate you unspeakably upon pedestals. It was Zarathustra who cried: 'We must adjust our values.' Set but a sledge-hammer to my arm, and adjustment shall be effected right rapidly."

As my eye wandered over these hideous cenotaphs, it lit on the road leading from Guayaquil, where a peon came staggering under an empty coffin. It was a black coffin; on it was painted a silver cross. As the peon passed near me, swaying under his load, I wondered whither he was bound—and then he went into the grey house, where the men on the water tank were still peering, and I settled myself down to an hour's sleep.

It was four o'clock when I awoke. I yawned, stretched myself and ran for a little mule-drawn car which was about to start. Walking the town at dusk, I came to a *plaza*, to a bed of oleander and hybiscus in bloom, and to those same cathedral steps. Soft-eyed women in their *mantillas* passed in and out, a priest's voice sounded faintly, repeating a litany, and there was a low hum of response. White-suited men crossed the *plaza*, making for their homes, and innumerable crickets chirped the day's lullaby.

I left Guayaquil before the next sunrise, crossing to the railroad in a river ferry. Sitting there in the dark, a boy polished my boots. Another sold me a paper, and in the grey light, as I read, a paragraph caught my eye. Yesterday there had been an autopsy on the remains of the dictator, Montero, but owing to excessive putrefaction no exact analysis had been possible.

The Guayaquil and Quito railroad runs for twenty-five miles through the swamps. It reaches then a belt of rich jungle land, growing the world's finest cocoa. Passing through rising forests, it enters a deep glen, where a mountain stream rushes down, birds of rare plumage gleam from tree to tree, orchids and masses of tropical blossom brush the carriage windows. Above the forest belt, at over 4,000 feet, the sides of the glen, now quite bare, become high and frowning, and an all but vertical face of rock, seemingly a thousand feet high, thrusts itself across the track. The train takes this great face as it comes, in zig-zag. But the plateau is not yet reached; there are some hours more of heavy gradients, and one whole mountain side on the move, where augmented gangs raise the road-bed almost day and night. By mid-afternoon the train is traversing the barren Andean uplands, at over 10,000 feet; the solitary white mass of Chimborazo rises ahead. At sundown, the small town of Riobamba is reached, and the train stops for the night.

Out on the plateau again, the road rises to near 12,000 feet, and running over this bleak moorland is seen the paved causeway of Garcia Moreno. Chimborazo is left behind; but the volcano Corazón is showing, and over there Cotopaxi is throwing up smoke. We go down now, in long sweeps, to a little town among trees, where the Indians, in gay attire, rollicking drunk, keep a Saint's day, and an old woman, full of Michael and all arch-angels, is run over and done to death at a level-crossing. Then we rise up to the moorland again; but early on this second afternoon come to a green country, to homesteads, and pastures thick with cattle, and as we sweep and curve, there is the volcano Pichíncha in view, and Quito lying at its base.



At the time Spain flung her mantle over South America, the Incas of Peru were the most absolute of the world's rulers. From their high Andean plateau they ruled over half the continent; and when they sojourned in the northern city of Quitú, their courtiers daily traversed that famous highway of cut stone to the capital, Cuzco, more than a thousand miles to the south.

But with the capture of Cuzco and its golden treasure by Pizarro, and his murder of the Inca, the suzerainty of the Andes passed to Spain. Hardly had the fatal news reached Quitú, when the *conquistador* Belalcazar, with 150 Spaniards, appeared there. The city only surrendered after bloodshed and torture. Even as the victors entered it lay a smoky ruin; the temples were rent in twain, the two thousand virgins of the Sun, beyond ravishment, lay still in death, and the fabled golden treasure—a second treasure of Cuzco—had disappeared.

The Spanish Quito was founded upon these ruins. An obscure period in its history follows, but this mountain city of the Indians was destined to become a strong, strong centre of the Roman faith. The first parish church, built in those very early days, is still standing; many more churches followed, and the convents and monasteries covered a quarter of the city. The Inquisition, too, was set up in Quito. The oven in which, by *auto-da-fé*, heretics expiated their sin, remained intact until recent years, while the circular garotting stone, not so long ago, was being used by a thrifty miller in his mill. The year 1807 marked the completion of the cathedral. In the decades which followed came the revolution against Spain, and Quito found itself capital of the Republic of Ecuador.

When I came to Quito it was sundown, and a Saint's Day. The bells were clanging from fifty churches: some

thinly, in little spasms of tolling, others deep and powerfully, but all with the dramatic *timbre* that is Romanism's secret. I passed up the cathedral steps. The organ was swelling, and men's voices chanted, yet before I entered, feeling the vivid romance of the moment, I stood awhile. Yonder, sixteen miles to the north, where the rain clouds were banked up, lay the Equator; yet the air was buoyant, almost chill, and in the garden of the *plaza* just below me, roses and stocks and pansies were in full bloom. The town lay almost in a cup among the bare hills, on the left of me rising the slopes of Pichíncha. Gonzalo Pizarro had fought the first viceroy of Spain here, Sucre the last, and I thought of the Scyris and the Incas, of the days of Spain, and the days of the republic, and of all the mysterious men who had made Quito's history.

It was twilight now, but the peals and the clashes and clanging never ceased. They seemed to have called forth all the population, dressed in deep black, and the worshippers now entered the churches in a stream; this strange town up among the volcanoes, at the back of the world, was surely religion mad!

I walked through the streets; at every corner there seemed a church, and I entered each one. They were all filled; and the men of Quito, who can be wild beasts, knelt praying as if their hearts would break. In the church of the Jesuits, the aisle, with its kneeling figures, lay in the blackness of night, but the high altar, where six priests in their red robes were prostrate, was blazing with light and gold. Through the windows of a private house high candles were burning, and in the empty room a body lay in an open coffin; amid this solemn tolling, this orgy of religion, it needed but a chariot of fire to descend, and an angel of the Lord to mount guard over the dead. Thus I came into Quito.

At another time, I stood on a hillside above, and took

stock of this strange town. With its sixty thousand souls, it lies in a sloping vale at Pichíncha's base. The mountain tops you cannot see, but in some four hours may ride to their white summits; and the sight of sights up there, for many, is the sheen of the humming birds as they hover against the snow.

The sounds which rise from the town are the tolling of bells (there are always bells tolling in Quito), and the trumpets of the army—clamant insignia of Archbishop and President, of the powers that be; besides these, in this republic of the mountains, no other man may flaunt himself.

Yet one other sound does rise in Quito—the horn of the bull-baiters. It is blown when a bull, segregated awhile from the slaughter herd, is set on a lariat, and a mounted peon guides it through the streets, where men and boys goad it to fury, and the women lean far out of the windows, sick for a sight of blood.

Looking down into Quito you see only the brown tiles. Then the low domes of the Cathedral stand out, and the towers of churches. There are over sixty churches in Quito. Some are now in dilapidation; but the largeness of so many, the finely carved façades, the old pictures, the ornamentation, the thought of rich and impressive masses being sung in this remote town up among the volcanoes, rivet the imagination.

The modern spirit makes way, even in Ecuador; but the grip of the Church on the masses of these people is prodigious. Romanism will find her last stronghold on the Andean plateau. When Vienna, and Madrid, and Rome are sceptic, we shall see Arequipa a new Avignon, and the Pope himself, with all his hierarchy, at length installed in Quito.

The greatest man Ecuador has produced, we must hold to be Garcia Moreno. He was assassinated in 1875, in

the *plaza* of Quito. With many, his fame tends to become legendary, even as the fame of Francia, the first dictator of Paraguay.

Garcia Moreno, for his time, was a reactionary. He supported the Church. He saw the country needed roads—and he set the Indians to forced labour. Modernism meant little to him, or the opening of Ecuador to the world; but he was constructive, and he was terribly strong. He neither robbed the State, nor did he permit robbing. For once, in Ecuador's history, government service was efficient, offices well filled, taxes gathered, roads, bridges and schools built, and the laws obeyed.

Like all the dictators, Garcia Moreno knew no fear; but he put the fear of God in others. A revolution broke out in the coast country, below Quayaquil. There was no railroad then, but the President, galloping on relays, dismounting, and dashing down mountain sides afoot, came to Babahoyo on the river, and thence, in a canoe, to Guayaquil—in *two days*! An English steamer lay in the river off Guayaquil. He seized it (as a pathetic protest in the consulate books still bears witness), cut away the forequarters, set up a gun, and within another day saw it manned and ready. Down the coast the conspirators awaited him, terror stricken. When they saw the steamer rounding the point, with Moreno on the bridge, they took to the mangroves and the bush, and the revolution collapsed; but for all the leaders, when captured, there was the dictator's verdict—and a quick despatch.

Another time, to him in Quito, it was told how Guayaquil had become one big gambling hell, and once again this austere man rode down the mountain trail. One evening he appeared to the chief of police. Demanding a single officer, and waving aside all protests, he went out into the dark night. "Who is it?" one

would cry. "You cannot enter"! "It is Garcia Moreno." Then the door opened, and a dozen white-faced men stood up to hear their fate. From house to house he went, through that night. "You and you," he would point, "will leave the country by the next boat. You and you will report yourselves to the government tomorrow"; and gambling in Guayaquil was dead.

What would Ecuador give for a Garcia Moreno today? The breed would seem to have died out. There has only been Alfaro of much note in these later years. Poor old Alfaro! Of those five naked corpses, dragged but yesterday through Quito, his, walloping along there at seventy years old, was one; his brains oozed out of his head, and a boy rode astride him, as on a horse.

Somewhere midway between Guayaquil and Panama, an estuary breaks the line of Colombia's coastal forest; an hour's steaming inwards brought me to the settlement of Buenaventura, low-lying, equatorial, whence I was to ride to distant Bogotá. The road to the interior passed through forest for forty miles, ascending then to green and watered uplands; here, in the cool, my mount quickened his pace, leaving pack-horse and *arriero* far behind.

A Colombian gentleman, well mounted, wearing *poncho* and Panama, now overtook me, and gave me "*buenas tardes*." I saw he was a man of breeding.

Rising presently in his stirrups, sweeping all the land with his arm, he turned to me—

"My country is beautiful, Sir!"

It was indeed! Where we rode was level—a watershed—but all around the land rose and fell in long undulations; and it was green. In the valleys, by the running water, peasants had built; beside their huts were flowering trees, patches of coffee or pineapples, breaks



of plantain and sugar cane. On the uplands too, beside the stretches of forest, huts rose in the recent clearings; and the ringing of an axe came to us.

Presently, riding along, a village of thatched houses was seen perched on the ridge. Farms lay below it on either side, herds of cattle fed upon the pastures. To the right, the land rose to a barren moorland, while out on the left, a league distant, stood a forest. It was sundown, yet the air had become alive with the quick cries of birds flying high, flying from over the waste and making, as one surely thought, for the forest. Yet it was not the forest they sought. These birds were green parrots—thousands and thousands of them—and they flew, one and all, to a clump of bamboos beside a stream, that lay under the village ridge. As we rode past this roosting-place, final adjustment was taking place for the night, and the multitudinous crying of parrots in those two acres of feathery boughs I shall not easily forget.

This was the village of Carmen, 4000 feet in the uplands. At the inn, awaiting supper, I lay on the green turf, and gulped the balmy night air. But a few hours before I had sweltered in the coastal forest, down by the equatorial sea, yet in a day's ride had entered a new world. At daybreak I rode on; crossing a forest-clad range at 6000 feet. The Cauca Valley lay far below, and by its edge, nestling under the hills, the old town of Cali, with its church towers and red-tiled roofs.

The *conquistador* Belacazar, after founding Quito, rode northwards into new countries. With a keen eye for fertile land, he established Popayán, and travelling down the Cauca, founded Cali and Cartago.

The Cauca Valley retains its fertility. To-day this district, shut off from the Magdalena and from the capital by many leagues of mountains, is the richest in all

Colombia. The people, too, are held in some repute; the town of Popayán, an ecclesiastical centre, having given ten presidents to the republic.

Over the Cauca now lay the softness of an English park. Troops of horses fed on the long grass, herds of cattle rested under the immense trees. In each mile or so the eye lit on some giant and exotic syringa, all mauve blossom; in a certain stretch of forest the odontoglossum orchid, of the same colour, was flowering massily high in the trees, while beside the thatched peasant huts hibiscus and the pink antigonon grew. Anon, this being a valley of the tropics, I passed through cane fields; areas of this soil have lain under sugar for eighty years.

At Cartago, four days from Cali, I left the Cauca, heading over the uplands to Manizales. This was a no less fertile country; indeed, its richness staggered me. To each peasant on these uplands, to each new settler, Nature had allotted a hillside, a mountain stream, a patch of forest. His hut might rest beneath bamboos. In his garden, with but scant tillage, might grow coffee, cocoa and oranges; in his clearings tobacco, maize, plantains and sweet potatoes; while his cattle, his pigs and poultry, might find at hand a rich and ample sustenance.

Yet between ideal and real, what a gulf! Of all the men in this favoured land, was there one who realised its riches, or used one-tenth of its gifts? This slovenly and enervated race, living upon plantains like swine, tilling little, growing but enough to support life, were not fit for their heritage.

From the town of Manizales, a northern road leads to the state of Antioquia, where the land is higher, rugged, less fertile, and where, surrounded on all sides by a race sunk in climatic lethargy, a more strenuous people have taken to mining and commerce. The Antioqueño, in Colombia, is indeed *sui generis*; he is a moun-

tain Jew, transplanted from the Old World, and thriving up here in the New. When Charles V, importuned by his viceroy for immigrants, could spare none out of Spain, he sent to New Granáda fifty families of Tunis Jews; and these, retaining many characteristics, though neither the Jewish faith nor language, have multiplied, and are become, even after dilution of the blood, the soundest community in Colombia. Do they recollect this in the *souks* of Tunis? I should imagine not. But a keener than the Tunisian Jew—the Syrian—has run across the scent. To-day, beginning as a pedlar, and passing to a land-owner, he is spreading over Colombia.

The second day beyond Manizales, after a long ascent I came to the Moravia Pass, where, at 11,000 feet, the track crosses the central range of the country. The mountains here are wooded; but so cold was the wind, so rugged the track, that I dismounted, and went afoot. It was a lonely road. For some hours I had seen no human being, when, at the top of the pass, five nuns rode past me on mules, wearing white sun bonnets, and I had hardly started down the farther slope when a great shouting and whistling arose. The narrow track, here at its worst, is cut for a distance along the face of a precipice, and at this spot two transport trains were now meeting. The descending train were horses, perhaps thirty, with half-a-dozen *arrieros*. Among these went a horse-borne litter, conveying to the Magdalena River and so to Europe and the operating table, a merchant of Manizales, in the last stages of an obscure and horrible disease; two women with haggard faces rode beside him, and several servants followed the litter on foot. The ascending train of fifty or sixty mules, heavily freighted, was now on the ledge, and the mules, with the cunning of their species, were taking the wall. Struggling upwards, grunting, they swung their heavy loads across

the track; while the frightened horses, bumped by the packs, stumbling among the boulders, stood in a narrow zone of safety, gazed terrified at the depths below, and snorted with fear.

The trains passing at length, I went forward. By sundown the Moravia Pass was but a grey slit on the horizon; but I saw now what before had been invisible—the high white peaks of Ruiz and of Tolima. Next day I came to Honda, the old Spanish town on the Magdalena, and my ride was over. Rising with the dawns, traversing roads at times all but unrideable, using up three horses, I had travelled 250 miles in ten days. Physically I was fit; yet not fit as were Alberto and Emiliano, the *arrieros*, travelling barefoot, who came in fresh as at the start. Indeed, the *arriero* is the best man in this land. Sweating in the valleys, winded on the high ranges, a 30-mile day is yet child's play to him; he never lags, and each evening turns up smiling with the pack. It is a hard saying, but you must keep him poor; overflush in worldly goods, he loses himself, runs to seed, takes most surely to drink; a spartan heretofore, he now cumpers the earth.

From Honda, in olden times, a famous mule trail—the *camino real*—led to the plateau of Bogotá. Horsemen and pack trains still use this, but I, my horses gone back, my saddle sold, declared for the upper river, and the new railway route. At Giradot, a village terminus on the upper Magdalena, I entered the train, and came in a day's journey to the *Sabana*.

The *Sabana*, or plateau of Bogotá, is spoken of in all Latin America. An outpost of that great plateau to the South, it lies at 8,500 feet, is perhaps forty miles by twenty in area, and of rare fertility. Its temperature, in this tropic land, is strangely cool. In the morning,

down on the Magdalena, I sweltered, but by three o'clock was in the climate of an English April; bracken and gorse grew by the thickets, willows hung over the streams, and the children were red-cheeked. Towards the far side of the plateau, beneath a range of dark and lowering hills, lay Bogotá. This was the city founded by the searchers for El Dorado, the city of the "Holy Faith," with a population to-day of 120,000, and the capital of Colombia.

This remote place holds you for its human interest. A fortnight's journey from the coast, shut off from the world, thrown upon their own resources, the upper class Colombians of Bogotá have developed a culture of their own. English is known; beautiful French is talked; classical music is played. In each house stands a piano, brought—God knows how!—on a mule's back, over the *camino real*. There is a university, a diversified press, an art gallery of local work, and a plague of minor poets. The ladies of the city, sweetly demure in their black *mantillas*, go to their prayers, and return; they are indolent, unformed, yet plastic, capable of better things. They are warm blooded. They are superior to the men, who, vain of their descent, their pure Spanish blood, their culture, their remote mountain civilisation, lack character, and are as useless in work as they are dishonest in politics. From the time of the revolution Bogotá became a city of black-coated politicians and petty intrigue. One may see, in the old Executive Palace, the window whence Bolívar dropped to the street and fled, and from that day political corruption has lain over Bogotá as a pall.

Facing the *Plaza Bolívar*, the heart of the city, is the fine modern building of the capitol. Built with borrowed money, on which the state has defaulted, this makes a grandiose setting for the Colombian Parliament. The



treasury is empty, and has been so for many years; were it otherwise, the rapacious would certainly loot it. Colombia is bankrupt. This rare and fertile land has been ruined. Her capital is dead poor, and her people of quality, worn out and useless, go threadbare in the streets. The Colombian paper dollar, issued on a gold basis, has lost all value whatever. The National Congress has assigned it a value of one half-penny—a mere token—and established, as standard currency, the British sovereign. "Five hundred dollars to a pound!" sums up the handiwork of those who have ruled Colombia.

In this country, let it be said, I received no uncivil word; I moved among a kindly folk. But the people—Spaniards of the *Sabana*, lowland half-castes, Indians and negroes in infinite permutation, who form the Colombian race—have sunk deep, and will not rise again. In all charity we take note of their environment (that so potent factor) in the life of the Equator, the mixing of the blood. What might we ourselves have come to in Colombia?

Physically the race is poor. It is streaked to the third and fourth generation with the taint of syphilis. On the rainy plateau, the men are contorted with rheumatism at fifty, dead at sixty. The blind are seen in every lowland village, and the halt, the scrofulous, the withered, form a great army. Their physical degeneration is completed by *chicha*; immense quantities of molasses, from which this ardent spirit is distilled, are conveyed over the country in goat skins. The lowland Colombian boy of fourteen, exceptionally bright and intelligent, by twenty-four has lost half his mental power; the sinister effects of *chicha* are on him. The *estanquilla*—the small, retail liquor shop—is dotted thickly over the land.

The *mestizo* girls are short and stoutly built, and by fourteen are developed. Up to sixteen they are often

comely; but beauty's day in this tropic land is brief. For these young mammals nature has a sterner duty. Their breasts swell; their thighs are become bulwarks; their every instinct is to motherhood. At sixteen they marry, and at twenty-six—certainly at thirty—their career is run. They are now fat, coarse, and slovenly, mothers of six or eight children, physically played out, great consumers of patent medicines. Sitting by their doors, their long hair hanging loose, their white dresses unfastened, their feet bare, they smoke long cigars, fan themselves, and pass the time in gossip. They are polite and kindly like all the rest, and not unhappy; their men seem to be faithful, and are certainly kind. The really old women are mere beasts of burden, carriers of wood and water. The flesh is all gone from their bodies; they sit on the ground, in some shaded spot; their wits have nearly left them, yet with a cigar between their toothless gums, they, too, have still a tag on life.

Get out of Bogotá, I advise you, and breathe the air of the *Sabana*. We will climb the sombre Monserrate. The track is steep; at this altitude one is easily winded, and the Indians who pass us, men and women, travelling with pack-horses to their mountain village, will not be overtaken. We turn aside near the summit, to rest by the old chapel, whose date is 1681. This is the dividing range. A shower of rain, falling on these hills, will flow to Magdalena and Orinoco in equal parts. Eighty miles from here all civilisation ends; beyond these ranges are found the wildest Indians on this continent.

Bogotá, resting far below us, is not beautiful, but no town of the Andes ever lacks interest. The *Sabana* lies placid in the afternoon sun. One sees the small villages with their churches, the dark groves of Eucalyptus, the flocks and herds, the patches of bare, black loam, and those of rye, wheat and potatoes. It can feed itself, the

*Sabana*; with manuring, an intensive culture, and a zest in the people for work, there might be great export to the lowlands.

Trains cross the plateau. A short line runs to the South, and an hour's walk from the terminus brings you to the waterfall of Tequendama, on the Bogotá River, a veil of lace dropping 480 feet. Northward, a line runs to Zipaquirá, where the salt mines are worked by small contractors. Beyond this again, at Muzo, in the low country, are the emerald mines—the finest deposits ever known. These salt and emerald mines are the property of the State; together with the monopoly of alcohol, their leasing out furnishes one-third Colombia's revenue.

And this rich and beautiful land is bankrupt! Ruined by those sworn to govern it justly! I would that that eagle, hovering yonder over Bogotá, were Nemesis; and that daylight to-morrow might find the politicians lying dead in their beds.

## CHAPTER IX

### CENTRAL AND NORTH AMERICA

I HAD not visited Central America; and one day, I boarded a steamer in New Orleans, thither bound.

The "Crescent" city is built round a defined bend in the Mississippi, where it lies dead level and colourless. The French quarter of old is now indistinguishable, and the French tongue hardly heard on the streets; the beautiful creoles are not there. Riverwards, I saw a going and coming of stevedores, negroes, Italians, Greeks, and drunken sailors; but there was neither dancing nor carnival on the levee, nor anyone "waiting for the *Robert E. Lee*."

The river ran high with the rains, and was exceedingly muddy. As we passed down the ninety miles to its mouth, one saw here and there over the Louisiana flats a tilled farm, here and there herds of cattle; but the old sugar estates seemed closed down, and much of the land gone to seed.

We steamed for two days across the Gulf—due south. On our starboard, some hundreds of miles away, lay Mexico, where in the old mining days I had been three or four times. The capital, Mexico City, and its surroundings, I knew well. The *plaza*, with its cathedral, was not surpassed in Latin America. On the cathedral's site, or that of the president's palace across the way, had stood the sacred altar of the Aztecs, worshippers of the Sun, and there, before the coming of Cortés, had innumerable human victims rendered up their lives to the implacable Aztec gods. "Blood! Blood!" was the cry.

"Cut the throats! Tear out the hearts!" On their great days, the channels flowed red, the sacred pavements became slippery; and it is told how a prince of the race, physically wearied with the morning's killing, fell swooning beside the altar.

Mexico was a considerable city, and many tramways left the *plaza*. One line ran to Guadalupe, a sacred shrine upon a hill. Another led to the bull-ring, that lay without the city. Another to the hill fortress of Chapultepec, whence one viewed those snowy cones of volcanoes lying in the south. Especially used I to note a line which ran out to the cemetery, for here "a funeral, with plumes and lights and music" went often by. It went by on a tramcar, the trappings supplied by the tramway company. As it swept past, one saw the coffin under its wreaths, the priest standing before a draped and lighted altar, the kneeling mourners, black and decorous; and back of these, it seemed to me, there once stood a *buffet*, all spread and garnished for the journey home.

In the capital, as elsewhere, one saw in the main two classes of Mexicans. Here went the aristocrat—some wealthy landowner; and there, in his hundreds, the *peon*, poor and ignorant, who nine times in ten was a virtual slave. The priests, at this time, might not go in their garb in public; yet the church, with secret friends in high quarters, was no less powerful than farther south.

At the head of the State, of fifteen millions of people, was set Porfirio Diaz, already an old man. He came out of the South of Mexico. His father, at one time a soldier, kept an inn, and was a man of mixed blood; the grandmother was a pure Indian. At seventeen, although with martial instincts, young Porfirio entered a law office in the town of Oaxaca. His employer was the *abogado* Juarez, and these two, master and apprentice, were to become the greatest their country has known.



Juarez was an Indian. But he was the greatest man in Mexico, and in those troublous times soon stood out a leader of the people. He led them against the Franco-Austrian army. He led the fighting against that weakling emperor whom Napoleon III forced upon Mexico, and on the day Maximilian was shot, assumed the presidency. Next to him, in prowess and prestige, stood the young Diaz. He was a marvellous soldier; he won his battles, and was a general at thirty-two. Beaten once, by Marshal Bazaine, he was captured; but escaping, he rallied his army, and never again knew defeat. On the death of Juarez, whose great mental force had failed, the Vice-President of that day took up the reins; but the masterful Diaz, whose eye was to quell thousands, quickly ousted him. He was proclaimed president. He served his period, and in terms of the constitution made way for a successor. But the new man was weak, and a reactionary; as he stepped down, Diaz, who knew the country's needs, again stepped up. The constitution was altered. He was re-elected again and again, and stood at Mexico's helm for just thirty years. He was a dictator, pure and simple. In the earlier years, to consolidate his power, he killed his enemies right and left; and up to the age of over seventy he knew no rival. But he was entirely constructive. He raised the status of Mexico out of all recognition. He was the strongest statesman Latin America had produced. On the day Rhodes died, in my opinion, Diaz became the biggest figure in the world.

When he approached eighty years old, his great powers failed. As he let go the reins, these fell into the hands of self-seekers, of capitalists, of exploiters of the people, and from all over Mexico came revolutionary threats. These centred in one Madero, a benevolent little democrat and visionary of great wealth; and in a flabby, feminine age, this flabby, feminine little person found himself

the chosen of the people. Diaz, barely escaping with life, fled with his young wife to Spain. Admittedly, he was finished; but if Madero thought he could run Mexico after this great man, he was mistaken. In just two years he ran it to a standstill. Law and order were gone. Millions had vanished from the treasury. Capital and property and life itself were no longer secure. Mexico's status had sunk below where Diaz found it.

I had never seen Don Porfirio in Mexico; but it was my good fortune to meet him in the days of his exile. As he drove with his *señora* in a certain thoroughfare, I hailed him, made my compliments, and in halting Spanish told him where I rated him among men. The old man was eighty-three. All the fire was gone from his eyes. If he did not grasp quickly what I said, at least the *señora* did. "*El hombre mas grande del mundo!*" she echoed, and patted him in her pride.

The third day out from New Orleans, entering an island-dotted bay, we dropped anchor off Belize, British Honduras.

A small wooden town lay by the water; and behind it the forest. The mouth of a creek stood to it for a harbour; a schooner or two comprised the shipping. There was no railroad to the interior, hardly, indeed, a metalled road, and I could sense but little enterprise. The population was overwhelmingly negro, and life not strenuous. On this Sunday afternoon, as I walked, a regular breathing could be heard behind the jalousies, and once, to harmonium accompaniment, a singer's voice rose crudely in a hymn. The soil seemed poor and thin, as if it overlay a coral strand; but trees and creepers were finely abloom, and the sea very blue and sparkling.

Mahogany, and other choice woods, are this small colony's export. They are of considerable value; but represent a wasting asset, and must now be sought at some dis-

tance in the interior. Then there is export of *chicle*. This is the sap of a tree, and the basis of chewing-gum. Much of the mahogany and timber trade has passed into the hands of Americans; and the *chicle* is theirs by salivary wont.

Sailing from Belize on an evening, next daylight found us entering a river, from whose forest-clad banks the mists began to rise. As they rose, an ugly settlement with galvanized roofs was laid bare, and we tied up to a wharf. A train stood here, ready to receive us.

This was Puerto Barrios, Guatemala. It existed, one knew, through the railroad, through the export of bananas; the low forests closed about it, and seemed to reek of malaria. As we sped to the interior, the forests fell back. For some miles on either side the rails, land had been cleared. It now lay solidly under bananas, and on many a siding stood a box car, which negroes loaded with the green fruit. We began to ascend. For a time the forests rose with us; then we passed to a dry and barren upland belt, with mimosas, but with little else that was green. In the afternoon, traversing watercourses and hillsides, we again rose up; and by evening reached the plateau, close on 5000 feet high, and Guatemala City, the capital. It was dark when I came to my hotel; many roses were blooming in the *patio*, the air was the air of spring, and I lay down to sleep beneath blankets.

The early Spaniards, with their unerring sense of location, had marked down these Guatemala highlands. Two great volcanoes rise up here, and at the base of one, an incomparable site save for eruption, they placed their city. It grew and prospered. It became, after Lima and Mexico, the third city of America. It was the seat of a Captain-General. Las Casas, greatest of all missionaries, came here to his work. Here cochineal was discovered; and here, direct from Arabia, came a friar

with coffee berries, giving to these uplands their now choicest product. So the city prospered till 1773, and was then wiped out. Eruption, the one catastrophe, came to the mountain, and the city at its base was no more. To-day, amid vestiges of a rich architecture, one counts the ruins of forty-five churches; a re-peopling has taken place, but the new Guatemala stands a day's journey distant, thirty miles from the mountain's base.

The new Guatemala is a straggling, one-storied town. The Indians inhabit its fringes. Wretched mule cars traverse the roughly flagged streets. Beside the several barracks slouch the little barefoot soldiers. The central *plaza* is adorned with flowering trees; behind these the cathedral rises, the façade is majestic, the dome is set in the mauresque manner with yellow tiles, but the interior is tawdry. Behind the cathedral the Indians hold a street market, where tobacco, coffee, dried fish, beans and earthenware supplement the fruits of the region. There are flowers too, and amid the squalor and poverty one breathes the air of an eternal spring.

After dark, a melancholy, a deep silence, settles on the city. The poor slink to their hovels. The streets empty. The clatter of carriages over the flags dies away. But Guatemala is not at rest. At night a policeman stands in each shadow, spies move about, soldiers mount guard at many a point. In the presidency, nervous and expectant, sits Estrada Cabrera. He is dictator of Guatemala. And no squeamish man, but a dictator of the first water, who has held this land twenty years now by the throat. Power has been his god. To hold it, he has cut and shot right and left. He has put hundreds out of the way, and hundreds—their sons, or brothers or friends—are sworn to do the like by him. Hence the terrorism that is over this land, the spies at every turn, the capital full of soldiers and police, the melancholy that comes



upon her at nightfall. The dictator is not wholly bad. His work for Guatemala has not been without its value. Given the chance, one sees him sobering into a constructive old age. But he may not get that chance. He has gone too far. Some day those about him will relax their vigilance, and he will be shot down like a dog.

Guatemala has sunk. To-day she is little more than an Indian state. Her railways are American, as is that banana industry along her Atlantic coast. Her trade is mostly German, and several thousand Germans live here. Much of her coffee is German grown. Yet she is fertile, her western slopes are rich. The train goes winding down these, from the highlands to the shores of the Pacific, amid an idyllic beauty; but one sees only the Indians, and everywhere a retardation.

A steamer of the Pacific Mail lay off San José, and so I sailed from Guatemala; and in a short night's run came to Acajutla, a port of Salvador.

This Salvador is the least of the nineteen Latin-American republics. Nevertheless, a great panorama spread itself, rising to extensive uplands, green and thickly wooded. In the centre of this great landscape a natty volcano smoked; I had seen it long ago, on Salvador's first issue of postage stamps. The country is fertile, and in great measure one of small holdings. The people are mostly Indian, or just touched with white blood, but are thicker set, and have not the good looks of the Guatemaltecos. They are peasants in the main, going barefoot; yet I judged them happy, and, after Guatemala, an air of freedom seemed to play over this land.

The capital lies on rolling uplands—an peasant capital, with trees and gardens about it, and green hills around. The population is 70,000; yet it is but a flimsy town,



wooden-built, because of earthquakes, with cobble streets, mule trams, and many Indian hovels. The open spaces are gay with flowering trees, and many green parrots go flying across. In the central *plaza*, fronting the government building, and the wooden cathedral, a flamboyant was shedding its vermilion flowers. A year before, as the president of the republic passed beneath this tree, he had been done to death by some political rival.

The nights were pleasantly cool. But there came, on my second night in San Salvador, the first heavy down-pour. The rainy season had set in. Each night now there would be heavy rain, and the roads would soon become impassable. Hiring a horse, a baggage mule, and a *peon*, I rode out for the south.

The main road of Salvador keeps to the uplands, traversing a wooded belt, landmarked by extinct forest-clad volcanoes. I saw coffee growing in plenty, and maize and tobacco and beans. On the larger estates many cattle grazed. The peasants owned their fowls and their turkeys; but most especially their pigs, which were to be seen in great numbers. Fruit was plentiful; and the oranges, mangoes and avocado pears exceptionally fine. I imagine the avocado of Salvador is nowhere surpassed. At its prime it is one of the finest of things edible, much prized by these old Spaniards as an aphrodisiac. At the small inns, if the meat reeked of garlic, there were at least bread and eggs, oranges and avocados, and wonderful coffee. This was a well-peopled region. At Coyutepeque, *fiesta* was to be held, and the *plaza* was crowded. On the steps of the church Indians were beating drums, a summoning to distant listeners, whilst inside it the young girls of the town, in virginal white, hung up the last garlands. Festoons of frangipani—the *flor de la cruz*—hung from each pillar, and the massy blossoms of flowering trees. The peasantry

were dressed up, very happy, and as yet noticeably sober. The last of the Salvador landmarks is the volcano of San Miguel, forest-clad like the rest. South of this, the little state, meeting the Gulf of Fonseca, comes to an end.

The Gulf of Fonseca, some thirty miles wide, separates Salvador from Nicaragua. And at the head of the Gulf, to the East, Honduras has outlet to the Pacific; so that three states are seen to share its waters. The Hondureñan water at gulf head being shoal, Honduras has advanced to a small island, near the centre of the gulf, and there placed her port. This village, by name Amapala, lay on the water's edge, half hidden beneath the vermillion of flamboyants; behind it rose the island cone, a thousand feet high, covered with primæval forest. My objective was now Tegucigalpa, the capital of Honduras, lying ninety miles in the interior. Reaching the mainland, I secured mules, and a guide, and set out upon the three days' ride.

The road into Honduras seems the one solid bit of work in that State's troubled history. It is good going in the main, and along the mountain sections stands for solid engineering. Some years before, it had lain in dilapidation, but the government now in power had set aside a sum for its repair; I was astonished to pass a number of road gangs, laying metal very solidly, and several steam rollers.

But this was a poor country I rode through. Always hilly, sometimes rising into mountains, it passed from wooded scrub to savannah and again to scrub, but only in the valleys was there trace of fertility. Population was scanty. The people one saw were desperately poor. Their homes—frameworks of bamboo and palm leaves, thatched with red tiles—were mere hovels. Possessions, save pigs, they had none. Continuous war and revolution

had ruined them, killed their aspirations, sapped their mentality; and one saw that, living from hand to mouth, they would continue to slouch through life.

The rains were now set in. Each evening they came, and there was a heavy pour until two in the morning. At three o'clock I rose from my stretcher in some small inn, woke the slumbering *peon*, and by half past three had mounted and set out. The air was fresh and cool. The mules travelled at a brisk walk. At exactly ten minutes to five a greyness crept into the East. It was not the dawn; but in half an hour had aired and scented the sky against dawn's coming. The sunrise came at half past six. In the midday heat the beasts travelled wearily; by two in the afternoon the day's ride was over.

The Hondureñan capital was sighted from afar. It lay at over 3000 feet, under a range of considerable hills. An Indian precinct of hovels lay on the near side, and, crossing the river by a fine stone bridge, one entered Tegucigalpa. The river's bank rose in a bluff, and upon it there stood a barracks. Here, too, stood the presidency, a one-storied house, painted green, with a loop-holed fort commanding the bridge. Sentries were mounted, and a number of officers in uniform hung about. The little town, all told, held but 15,000 inhabitants—half-castes and Indians. Not less than 2000, it seemed to me, were soldiers, ragged and shoeless, armed with rifles long out of date; the officers, coated heavily with gold braid, were to be counted by dozens. At five in the evening a regimental band marched to the *plaza*. The bandsmen wore boots, had been taught by a European, and played passably. At this hour the government offices closed, the students were released from the university, and I found myself surrounded by the elite of Honduras. A number of these wore well-fitting white

suits, with the Panama hat. Their manners were good, their bows were florid, but the handicap of their blood was not to be concealed. To the Indo-Spanish strain, the negro had here been added. One saw the crinkle in the black hair, the tiger's look at the back of the eyes. Instability was written on many a face, and the country's cycle of intrigue and revolution made clear.

There was once a banquet at Tegucigalpa. The president of that day attended, and next to him sat the consul of the United States. As they supped, suddenly the electric light failed, and the room was plunged in darkness. The president, fearing a plot, sprang up; but the consul, crying "Sit down! You are safer," pulled him back to his seat. The light returned suddenly as it went. It revealed the consul, calm and collected; the president wiping a sweat from his brow; whilst every other man in that room was on his feet, guarding himself with drawn revolver. That is Honduras.

Returning to Amapala, the island village in the Gulf of Fonseca, I took the nearest way into Nicaragua. In a motor launch I left Amapala at midnight, in the pouring rain. At a fine dawn we entered a river. Sailing up through the forest, upon a waterway a full hundred yards wide, the pilot now headed into a side creek, narrow and tortuous, where the branches met over our heads. At length the boat grounded. A stone's throw ahead the creek itself ended, and here, a spot marked on the map as Tempisque, stood five huts. I stepped ashore in Nicaragua.

The forest rose all around. A track wound through it; it led, I knew, to the village of Chinandega, six leagues distant, but lay deep in mud. Neither horse nor mule was to be had, but an ox-cart was expected that night, to take away pigs, and would convey my baggage. The

pigs, together with fowls, had been landed from a boat, and were cooped now in a box. The fowls were tied by their legs to a long stick; they lay immovable in the hot sun, the prey of innumerable insects, and of a cloud of flies, and one was already dead.

The people of the huts, a telegraphist, a couple of soldiers and their women, were miserably poor and degraded. They went ragged and barefoot. They were anæmic from malaria, and quite listless; when not employed, both men and women would cast themselves into hammocks, and lie with closed eyes. At the dusk the rains came on, and mosquitoes began to bite furiously. The people of the huts ate their miserable supper, and by seven o'clock had crept beneath their mosquito nets and lay asleep. I sat alone, listening to the rain, stung to madness, until, at nine o'clock, there was a sound of wheels, and a lantern came swinging out of the forest. The ox-cart had arrived. It carried a big pen; and in the darkness and the rain a transference of the pigs took place. This lasted an hour; after which my baggage was hoisted up, the fowls were hung behind, and we started towards eleven o'clock. It was densely dark in the forest. A boy walked ahead of the four oxen swinging a lantern. I walked hour after hour by his side, clogged with mud, floundering into quagmires, tripped up ever and anon by the branches of trees, my arms working like a windmill. With a gradual stopping of the rain, mosquitoes were upon us in thousands; I lashed my face and legs unceasingly, and the sweat poured from me in a stream. As for the cart, with its solid wooden wheels, now it was stuck in the mud, now dashed from side to side; in the pitch darkness it went bumping and creaking, and only by a miracle escaped capsize; while the oxen groaned under the goad, the fowls cried out poign-



antly, and the squealing of the pigs was something appalling.

So passed my first night in Nicaragua. Dawn found me a scarecrow, caked with mud and sweat, bitten to death, and full, did I but know it, of the malaria germs; but Chinandega was reached, I sat down to a superb bowl of coffee, and a pineapple, and my troubles vanished with the rising sun. That day, taking the train, I passed by Momotombo, the famous volcano of Nicaragua, and reached Managua.

Managua, the capital, lies by the shore of a great lake. Forest-clad mountains rise on the far shore, while everywhere stretches a rolling, wooded country, rich and fertile. It is a volcanic country. A mile behind the town lies a fathomless lagoon—a crater, where the washerwomen go with their clothes; and on the horizon the smoke of Momotombo is always rising. A rich and beautiful country this, degraded by her people. They fight and fight. The men at the top rob the state, loot its treasury; and the downtrodden peasants have well-nigh lost incentive to produce. Nicaragua is bankrupt. She is most degraded. Her capital is a squalid and miserable spot, in the last stages of exhaustion.

This country, being run to a standstill, had passed under the control of the United States. Americans were in charge of her customs, of the railway, and other sources of revenue, and a hundred American marines kept law and order in Managua. It was a purely business matter. Nicaraguan rivers and lakes form the nucleus for a canal across Central America. This, in the hands of a hostile power, might have menaced the whole American position at Panama, so the States prudently acquired it for themselves. They paid Nicaragua "option money," securing the right to these waterways for a long period of years; and upon the flight of the despot Ze-

laya, and the country's collapse, they just stepped in to make their position secure. They acted wisely.

Limon, the Atlantic port of Costa Rica, is but half sheltered from the sea. The long swell comes up, breaking itself on the rocks, and the steamers at the wharves rise and fall, straining heavily at their cables. They come here—sometimes three and four steamers in a day—to load bananas; Limon sends more of these away than any port in the world.

A steamer ties up. Ere half an hour has passed, a train load of box cars has been shunted alongside, some hundreds of Jamaican negroes have appeared, and loading is in progress. The negroes, receiving from the cars, carry the bunches to conveyors—travelling belts, driven by steam—which lift them to the vessel's deck; whence they are passed down to the holds, to be kept at a fixed temperature. The bunches are green, and all approximate a standard size. The "professional" bunch of bananas, for shipping, ought to have nine hands, with ten fruits to the hand—say 90-100 bananas to the bunch. For bunches appreciably larger or smaller the shippers do not pay full value.

The banana is one of the food staples. Together with the plantain, a larger and coarser variety, it is the chief food of millions of blacks throughout the tropics. Chemically, it may be compared with the potato, but with less labour yields three times as much food. Bananas yield more food, over a given area, than maize, oats, wheat, or rye. Primitive stomachs absorb them with ease; Humboldt pointed out their virtues whilst Stanley proclaimed banana flour most digestible of all foods. But for me they are simply Hell.

A railway runs from Limon to San José. At first through the forest; but soon it comes to the cleared

ground, where cocoa is growing, and the bananas, and where the labourers are Jamaican negroes. Then the line ascends through dense forest, beside a brawling stream; but the grade suddenly steepens, the curves and mountain faces stand out more boldly, and after an infinite panting and pulling, you find the train emerging on the upland, the brawling stream but a silver thread in the forest below.

You are at 4000 feet. The view here, where the forests merge into the rolling, green savannah, and the tropical heat dissipates in cool, balmy air, is one of the great moments of travel. You must yet rise to 5000 feet, the top of the plateau, where the country lies in grassy meadowland; then, you come out of the meadows, and sweep into San José.

A certain calm, placidity, lies over Costa Rica's capital. It is a poorish little town; but about it lie a number of gardens, and an open commonage of grass, a mile square. Further afield are many small holdings of the coffee growers, and the uplands beyond rise in a vast circular sweep. Living on these wide and fertile uplands, among the woods, and the hedged meadows, and growing the finest coffee on the American mainland, are the best people of Central America—Spaniards, who have kept the strain a full degree whiter than their neighbours. That they have deteriorated from the old stock; that in four hundred years they have become wolfish, like all Central Americans, is evident; but it is fair to credit them with some constructive sense, and to note there had been no revolution for several decades. So much for Latin America—the gorgeous, romantic empire of Columbus. And so much, alas! for its peoples. I know they are not to be judged as others; nature never gave these half-castes a chance. The blend, Spanish blood and Indian, was hopeless from the beginning. The heat! The politics! The

remoteness! . . . These people are what they were bound to be. Let us cross the Rio Grande, and enter America of the whites.

I am in New York. It is the down-town end of Manhattan, and the surging crowds pass me to and fro. All around such immense buildings rise to the skies, that my eyeballs are near bursting. Look at that office block! It rises forty floors, and houses ten thousand souls. Think of the brain behind it! This is not a building: it is just a vast frame of steel—the bricks, the stone facings, a mere afterthought. The foundations go a hundred feet deep; it will *give*—I don't know how much!—to the pressure of a hurricane, and resist tremors better than granite. Some daring brains have gone to the projecting of that. And *some* steel! . . . They juggle with steel over here. Enter. You will find thirty lifts; there are express lifts, not stopping below the twentieth floor, just as there are express electric trains in the subway below the street.

Here is an uptown hotel—one of hundreds. It too, rises into the clouds. There are two thousand bedrooms. And to each bedroom a bathroom, with hot and cold water. They are ever so clean, these Americans. Nearly all clean shaven, too, and their barbers regular skilled artists. Their teeth look so well; they are experted by crack dentists, men as daring in ivory as those builders in steel. Ever so many wear glasses, or spectacles, and again, in the background you sense a body of skilled oculists. The very bootblacks put a shine which never shone on you before. These people are well dressed—rather to one mould though, and a shade too natty; a rough tweed or two in the crowd, a rough ulster, a soft collar here or there, would make all the difference.

But that hotel! It is dinner time, and if you declare

for a fine one, you can have it. Here is the vast restaurant. There the grill. There the *Kaffay*. You may order anything on earth. It will cost like nothing on earth, but will be served with a minute perfection. These two thousand rooms will average five dollars a night, for the room only—call it a pound sterling; but there are tens of thousands in New York to-night who will casually pay more. Americans are rich. You can't get away from it. They are so damned rich! Five thousand pounds a year cuts no ice in New York. If you walked down Fifth Avenue, and had less than a million dollars, you knew your name was mud.

After dinner, you saunter down Broadway. It is a starless night, but a thousand electric signs in the heavens, flashing, and dying out, and flashing again, make all around as bright as day. Gigantic! Vastly original! And how this advertising strikes home! See these crowds, who gaze up, cogitating, emotion in their faces; in this land a full-page "Ad," well displayed, a skysign that flashes, and flashes again, grips the very soul.

You say you will take New York for granted. But it is the same elsewhere. Everything that is material, and mechanical, these people have mastered. They are the world's specialisers. We have seen, in an evening's walk, the architects, the oculists, dentists, barbers, boot-blacks; steel-making, electric traction, hotel-keeping, advertising—and everywhere they are on the top notch, everywhere as good as the best.

Just a moment—talking of specialisers. This is not New York, but the vestibule of a Western hotel. They have pointed me out, let us say, the "Tomato King." (Pronounced Tomayto.) He is clean-shaven, with a determined chin. He looks uncouth, and would be out of place in Boston's drawing-rooms, but he puts up in tins the finest tomato soup in the world. He sits there



chewing tobacco, squirting it with accuracy into the adjacent cuspidor, while he cudgels his brains over the problem of Oregon's pears. Did one but know it, he is putting as true and deep thinking into pears as ever Schubert put into composing songs, and next year will place on the market the finest brand of these ever.

Then who *are* the Americans, you ask. The State and Municipal elections are on, and the hoardings over the country plastered with names. Mostly the names are Walsh and Murphy; Schmidt and Müller; Balboni; Mendoza; Vandyk; Ohlsson; an Isaacs and a Jacobs; an 'ovich, and several 'skis; and they are all good Americans. Yet there are bigger men behind them, and a vast, inarticulate backbone—the real ballast; if *their* names got to the hoardings, you would read Adams, Clark, Parker, Scott, Russell, Murray, Shaw, Walker, Webb, Wilson; and many things would thereby be made clear.

Climate! Boundless resources! Freedom to develop! Add these to the old stocks—to our own in particular—and you get the American. Because of the climate, he is energy incarnate. And his tradition is to use his head—get every ounce from his brains: never to slacken. In a word—he lives his life to the full. It is a big, big thing to do, look at it as you may.

Yet Americans, with their material and mechanical mastery, are only human. They are too emotional. They are self-righteous. The nation is easily swayed by suggestion—good or bad. Waves of a puritan idealism sweep across it. And then, waves less ideal. And with each wave there rises a nation-wide cry: "We thank Thee, Lord, we are not as others." But they are. The forces of good and evil, of "Morgan and Harriman," as someone called them, wrestle together here as elsewhere.

Americans are just as human, as fallible, as the rest of us.

But the most interesting thing in this country to-day comes on no wave. It is this. American women are losing respect for their men. They are the mates of the most forceful, originating, *doing* race in history, yet they treat them, by and large, without respect, with scant politeness, often with thinly veiled contempt, as those of an inferior mould.

And why? Because the men have set the tradition. Because these strong, forceful males have let the idea become nation-wide, and persisting, that the woman is superior.

It is dreadful. Much more dreadful for the women than the men. In every true woman is the longing, not only to love, but to lean, to look up; and when she can do this—behold!—she has gained her heart's desire.

But to-day, in America, men proclaim they are weak; not to be leaned on, not looked up to. They proclaim it—God help them!—with unction; and straightway the minds of women begin to sour, their hearts to atrophy.

An American I know was driving his car through the streets of London. There was an accident, and a factory girl fell with a broken limb. The American, laying her in his car, drove to a hospital, placed her there, and saw she had every attention. When she was cured, and about to leave, he paid her a farewell visit. And she said to him: "I'm only a poor factory girl, sir, and I can't repay your kindness to me, *but don't you eat no black jams.*" She knew. It was her ewe-lamb of knowledge. (That American, by the way, was Hoover.)

Well I, too, am as that factory girl. I cannot erect your sky-scrappers. Nor juggle with steel. Nor build railroads. Nor corner copper. Nor create "big business." But I have my ewe-lamb of knowledge, and

nothing in this wide world can take it from me. It is this. *Don't be humble to women.* Go home, my dear man, with a new light in your eyes; and when the wife gives you the old contempt, you give her the Old Adam . . . give it her bright and early, and she will begin to love you on the spot.

But anyway I am for the Americans, to the end of the chapter.

To cross the imaginary frontier into Canada, is to find a like environment, and a people strangely the same. How else could it be? One hundred millions must attract eight millions; and when they happen to be vital, efficient, worthy of compare, the pull they exercise is tremendous.

Canada's personality is thus dominated as yet by the United States. It could hardly be otherwise. All things considered, there is no reason it should be. An American, crossing the frontier, finds his ice-water, his weird breakfast foods, his coffee—not tea, the hot towel, the nasal twang, the natty tailoring, the grip, the sleeper “reservation,” the staring headline, the boosting *par*, the clean-shave, the Real-Estate lie, the supreme importance of dollars, the pathetic belief in “uplift,” and the vague idea that the millennium is due about 1930; as at home, he finds a thousand similar thought processes; and he even finds, though it be as yet incipient, the dreadful spectre of the boss woman.

Yet the Canadians are not other than a virile, capable folk, and their land a land you can love. If you would realise the glamour of Canada, go out on the wheat plains of Manitoba at the reaping, and two months later, down in Ontario, walk through the scarlet and gold woods. And then, if you would be alone, sadly to feel winter stealing down from the North, enter this canoe,

pilot her along the still lake, in the dusk, between the fir forests.

As for this empire—one cannot call Canada just a country—it may reach any destiny. Her resources are still boundless. Her climate does not enervate. Population will keep pouring in; and those now living may see her with thirty—forty—fifty millions of people, rich, independent, one of the Great Powers of the World.

In Newfoundland, across the straits, our oldest colony, a ramshackle railroad winds among the fisher villages of the West Coast, and crosses to St. John's over a waste of peat bog, morass and stunted forest. There seemed not one acre of sweet grass land, hardly a cow, hardly a sheep. The great island seemed given over to the caribou, who, migrating northward in the summer, heading south in the fall (and as Selous told me, who spent a season there), almost on identical days each year, crossed and recrossed the desolate track in a multitude. Round about St. John's, a grey town inside remarkable heads, there lay a little open country, but on a twelfth of June, when I took stock, it was a cold and bleak spot. Fishing is clearly the island's standby, and salting the fish down; but when the fleet comes in, St. John's carries home a cod, or two large haddocks, for its tea. Just one other industry was indicated. There was fine water power; there were vast forests. The making of paper, from wood-pulp, was indicated, which a big brain from over the sea has since translated into account.

## CHAPTER X

### THE CARIBBEAN SEA

THE islands of the Caribbean, set out on Mercator's Projection, are seen clustered in the similitude of a lobster. The head of the crustacean is Northern Cuba, his tail reaches to the island of Granada, and he seems about to enter the Gulf of Mexico. But he will not do so. Florida is watching him; and Florida, with her Lake Okeechobee, is the head, eye, and neck of a turtle, whose expression, *vis-à-vis* the lobster, is slightly minatory—always supposing minatory turtles to exist.

Far out in the Atlantic, distant from the clustering isles, lies Bermuda. This is but a tortuous strip of land, and if it be twenty miles long, is in few places so much as one mile wide. Ascending its highest point, I saw the strip to be wooded, to be formed of one main, and some hundreds of smaller, often diminutive, islands.

Numerous coves indent the coasts, and about them stand the whitewashed cottages of the people. Inland, on their small holdings among the firs and cedars, these coloured persons raise early crops for the American market. This one grows his acre of early potatoes, Bermuda's choicest food product, and that one his patch of onions. Here is a big bed of violets, and more and more they are laying down ground in white lilies. There is sea fishing, too, but the islands' main supports are the vegetables and flowers. Among the trees, or flitting across some flower patch, one sees the most brilliant little birds outside the tropics. Some are cardinal, others bright blue. The first, at least, are known in America;



but there is no replenishment from the far distant mainland, and these brilliant birds of Bermuda are dying out.

Of all the Bahama Islands, I only landed on New Providence. This was just a night's journey from Miami, on the Florida coast; yet the little steamer, heading across the rushing Gulf Stream, was tossed on that night most pitifully.

Nassau, this island's town and the Bahamas' capital, is a poorish little spot. Sponges seemed its main trade, with some turtle fishing; but all over the island, which is coral, the negroes were planting up the fibre-making cactus. Strange fishes swam in the sea here, which lay clear and sparkling, and extraordinarily blue.

I sailed South to the island of Cuba. Of all her Western Empire, by the middle of the nineteenth century, this island and Porto Rico alone remained to Spain. But Cuba was the biggest, the richest island in the Caribbean. Her exports of sugar and tobacco were exceptional. Havana, her capital, was the largest town on these seas. Rich men were congregated there. The women, studded with jewels, drove in their carriages. The opera was the best in America.

But beneath the surface were rumblings—rumblings long and deep. Spain was oppressing this island. Her officials, often corruptly, were draining its wealth. Her soldiers were lawless and cruel. And the more the people cried out, the fiercer became the repression.

About this time, in the year 1848, President Polk of the United States made an offer for Cuba; but the Spaniards, shouting out that their honour was deeply wounded, turned the offer down. The old conditions continued, and in due time the Cubans broke into open revolt. The revolt lasted many years, and the reprisals of Spain were attended with infinite cruelty.

In 1898 the United States took action. Spain received

notice to quit. Failing to do so, she was driven out; and just fifty years after the cash offer, Cuba fell to the United States by right of capture.

The Americans held the island for a time. Yellow fever was stamped out. Plague was stamped out. An era of social reform was adumbrated. Then a flag was chosen for it; a president and vice-president were indicated; a new republic, with its ballot boxes and sanitary plumbing, was set up, and the American officials withdrew.

In just five years they were back again. Their sanitation was not in question; but it was found that they had omitted to stamp out the Cuban character, which, being Latin American, was given to corruption, and revolution, and in its higher aspirations to mere outward show and glamour. Again they put things right, and again departed, but the future of Cuba is a thing on the lap of the gods.

Havana, when I went there, seemed in transition. She was still the wealthy metropolis. She was still the world's fine tobacco mart. But American capital had poured into the island; much of it had centred there and the fine old architecture of Spain was going down before the utilitarian. Havana was nigh upon 400 years old, but her romance was ending.

Less than a hundred miles south of Cuba stretches the North Coast of Jamaica. On a cove of this coast, his ships being leaky and worm-eaten, Columbus spent a whole year, and thereafter the island passed for a time to Spain.

But for many generations now Jamaica has been British. Spanish strains have thinned out, and disappeared, Spanish influences have faded away; and if but a strait separates this isle from Cuba, a world sunders their mentalities.

Some thousands of whites live in Jamaica, and the half-castes are numerous; but the mass of the population are negroes, descendants of the freed slaves. Jamaica is their island. Their huts and villages set beside the shore, their fields and gardens on the hillsides or in the valleys, the island's long continued peace and security are very dear to these folk. In the main they are a decent, law-abiding people. In the main they are religious, and each village has its church and its chapel. Once I crossed the island on a Sunday. I saw the churches receive their congregations, clean and starched. I heard a hearty singing of hymns; and for the afternoon relaxation—to gossip, to flirt brazenly, to discuss the banana market—I saw the knots everywhere gather. The banana has saved Jamaica. From Port Antonio, an island-studded bay on the North shore, banana-filled steamers are eternally sailing; and more and more this section of the island is being planted with that fruit.

Jamaica can stand a more intensive cultivation. Much of it is mountainous; but these very mountains favour the coffee berry, and it is notorious that her "Blue Mountain" coffee can hardly be equalled. Nearly as much may be said of her best tobacco; and there seems no reason why the output of these superior products, together with the bananas, should not be increased. Government land is still to be had.

Wages were low in the island; for many occupations they did not exceed a shilling a day. Despite cheapness of living, thousands of the negroes have gone to Panama, to Costa Rica, to Honduras, to all the coasts of the Caribbean. They have helped dig the canal; they become stevedores, handle bananas, work on the railways for wages Jamaica cannot pay. But sooner or later, the majority return; and being the decent folk that they are, put their savings to good account.

Next in the chain is Haiti, the beloved island of Columbus; whose Eastern half to-day is the republic of San Domingo—half-caste and Spanish speaking; whose Western half is the republic of Haiti—negroid, French speaking and mysterious. This latter passed long ago to France, and in the 18th century thousands of French planters lived here; but so numerous were the African slaves they imported, so rapidly did these blacks breed, that they came to outnumber the whites ten to one.

An insurrection of blacks broke out, and was never quelled. After this beautiful land had been drenched in blood and horror, such of the French as had survived massacre finally withdrew; while on January 1, 1804, the blacks took a solemn oath to renounce white men for ever.

From that day the country has passed from dictator to dictator, from revolution to revolution. Agriculture and trade have languished, and the land, once so fertile, has run entirely to seed. Indeed, these mulattos and negroes, confirmed in their autonomy by the far-reaching Monroe Doctrine, have gone farther than seed. Many have reverted to the black superstition of the African forest. They worship serpents; and the innermost rites of their *voodoo*, performed to the drinking of human blood, are cannibalistic.

Meanwhile they have wiped the white man from their lives. There are a few white traders in Haiti, mostly German, but outside the port towns I imagine them to live in real danger. A white man requires a passport to enter the country. He may hold neither land nor property, nor occupy official position. In fact, he is anathema; the very saints and angels in the churches are painted black.

From Kingston, I came in a German steamer to Aux Cayes, a small Haitian port. A number of blacks were

returning there from Jamaica. Seating myself in a boat, upon a pile of their baggage, I was rowed to the landing wharf.

I had but passed on to the sand, on to Haitian soil, when a shouting reached me, and the captain of the port, followed by a rabble, ran up. He was becomingly dressed in deep mourning. But he was a nigger, fifteen parts in sixteen black, and his eyes were blazing.

"Where is your passport?" he asked, in a thick *patois*.

I produced it, correctly *visé*.

"It is not in order."

"Pardon me. It was *visé* in Jamaica."

"It is not, I tell you!" Summoning a barefooted soldier, he was about to convey me before some black tribunal; but I was in transit; the steamer, I knew, would sail within the hour, and such delay was out of the question.

"If you will permit me, *Monsieur*," I said to him, "I will return at once to the steamer."

The idea suited him, and I was escorted to the wharf. As I put off, the black rabble, knowing me turned back as an undesirable, as one not fitted to enter their country, jeered very openly. When still five hundred yards from the steamer, one of the two boatmen, a powerful negro, stopped rowing.

"Give me money!" he said in English. "Give me five dollars!"

I answered him: "The fare is half a dollar. I will give you a present when we reach the steamer."

Instantly heading around, the two started rowing furiously for a distant part of the shore. I looked at the receding steamer, at the powerful negroes before me and, jumping up, made a dash forward.

My opponent was on his feet. Seizing an iron rowlock, he stood as if about to brain me, shouting at the



top of his voice; his profile was set against a blue sea and a distant grove of palms.

These two men, I figured, could be overcome. But what then? The steamer lay far away; but near at hand five fisher boats already converged on us, or a dozen negroes in all, hostile to a man, and behind them, as I well knew, the whole of Haiti.

Thus we stood for the space of perhaps eight seconds; when discretion became the better part of valour. Taking a five-dollar piece from my pocket, I handed it to the negroes without a word. This they examined; then we all sat down, and the boat was headed again for the steamer. But contempt was in their eyes; and they burst into a loud singing as of those who triumph in battle.

Then I found myself in the island of St. Thomas. This was an isle but a few miles long, mountainous, of no economic value, yet possessing, in the heart of the Caribbean, a remarkable harbour and coaling station. So strategic was this harbour of St. Thomas, that the Germans were reaching for it, whilst the United States were to buy it for cash a little later on; but in my time it was still the property of Denmark.

Entered by a narrow channel, an amphitheatre of hills rose around the harbour, and the town of Charlotte Amelia lay at their base. A Danish flag floated over the old fort, but of Denmark little more was to be seen, and only the English tongue was to be heard. In the long main street, the crowd that passed was a black crowd with a leavening of whites. There were the Danish *gendarmes*, with no shade to their caps, in a uniform of bright blue. There were just a few old Danish ladies, dressed primly in black. With their baskets, they were to be seen in the marketing hours, but had retired before the heat of the day.

I judged these were the widows of one-time officials, now lying in the cemetery beyond the town, who were living out their lives upon a pension. Of greater interest were a number of white men going barefoot, strangely unkempt, mostly hawkers of fish, whom the blacks regarded with no respect at all. These men were of French descent, from the French island of St. Barthelemy, and were here to the number of perhaps a hundred families; but who, upon achievement of a certain saving, return to the island of their birth. They are a hard-working lot, and expert fishermen. Their women, who plait the rough straw hat of the island, are highly prolific. These people have no learning. They live in hovels. They are sunk to the level of the blacks; yet for a number of generations now they have kept their blood untainted. They are pure white. Not for gold will these women of St. Barthelemy have sexual truck with the coloured, and I hold them, uncultured and barefooted though they may be, proven of a great chastity.

In my days on St. Thomas I both rode and walked to the divide, to the hill tops, a thousand feet high, and from their crests viewed most of the island. The blue waters of the harbour, the nestling town, the wooded slopes, lay to this side; and to that, when I passed over the crests, lay the uncleared forest, sweeping down to a sparkling sea. Across these hill-paths came a few blacks. One led a cow, with its calf, another drove some horses, and there came women returning, who had carried in fruit to the market. Two stylish young negroes rode past. They were well mounted, carried shotguns, and a servant boy followed upon a donkey.

"Where are you going?" I called to them.

"We are going to shoot pigeons."

An industry of St. Thomas, the only one outside of its harbour, is the distilling of Bay Rum. Bay leaves grow

on the nearby island of St. John, where they are plucked and macerated with the raw liquor; and some half a dozen firms in Charlotte Amelia undertake its distillation. As I stood in one of these distilleries, a negress entered, laid down her shilling, and departed with a bottle of Bay Rum. This might have been cleanliness; but it had looked more like thirst, and I put the question.

"They drink it now and again," was the answer. "It's pure material, and 51% alcohol; but you must get used to the taste."

At night a cool breeze blew across the harbour. Under the trees by the landing were benches, and here I used to sit in the breeze until a late hour. The town lay very still. And when her lights had gone out, there remained but two glowing red beacons. These shone high upon the hillside; they gave entering seamen the line of the channel, and burned throughout the night.

Upon a dark and midnight hour, as I sat there, came suddenly a cry of "Murder!" Again it came, from over the water; and upon its heels, in a man's voice, five or six such full-throated screams as I had never heard. These ceased, and there was silence; then lights gleamed, and several *gendarmes* appeared, running, who put out in a boat.

In the flashes of a sheet lightning which played that night, I saw them row out a hundred yards, and board a schooner. Dirty work had been afoot. They told me that a negro lay with his head cut open. Another, a drunken bully, stood over him, murder in his eye; who was presently chained, and rowed ashore, and lodged in the old fort of Denmark.

At another daybreak, I lay off Basse Terre, capital of St. Kitts. Wooded hills rose in the West, but this was an island more rolling than mountainous. Sugar was

growing; and on the land back of the town the negroes were planting cotton.

Gazing out over the sea, I saw the small island of Nevis. Its harbour lay eleven miles from Basse Terre. With the day before me, I chartered a boat, and after two hours' sail set foot there.

It was one o'clock in the afternoon, and the village of Charlestown lay asleep. But a horse and trap were found, and I drove toward the uplands. This was an island of some 32,000 acres, and sloped to the foot of the central peak, an extinct volcano, that rose up high and forest-covered. In days of old the island had been a favoured spot, the centre of a planting aristocracy; now less than fifty whites lived upon it, the great estates were no more, and one saw the ruins of their houses and sugar mills.

Nevis has had her events. Upon a day in 1787, the planter aristocracy being assembled at "Montpelier," two naval gentlemen drove up to the house, and the company then repairing to the adjacent Church at Fig Tree, Captain Horatio Nelson, *H. M. S. Boreas*, was married to the widow Nesbit. The bridegroom lived to achieve immortality. His best man, the Duke of Clarence, lived to become William IV. The lady was comely, and only twenty-three; but it is possible, remembering certain things, that she lived to rue the day's contract, which is still to be seen in the old register of the Church.

Down in Charlestown village, by the seashore, I saw another ruin of a house. Here was born, and lived as a boy, Alexander Hamilton, whose intellect, next after Washington's character, was to give the United States their splendid send off.

The next step was the island of Antigua—again British; and here, defying the heat, I made my excursion towards the interior on foot. Along the country roads

came the blacks to market, uncouth females mostly, their skirts caught up curiously around the waist, shouldering heavy loads; yet for so poor a community, a number drove donkey carts. The capital town of St. John's lies picturesque upon a bay, its rise topped by the Cathedral, by Government House, and a grassy park. St. John's is a negro town, just as the island is negro, but you will see the names on shops are Portuguese, and you will hear, as at St. Kitts, that the land is becoming Portuguese too. In a labour scarcity, some fifty years ago, these islands drew on the men of Madeira. They came—poor, ignorant peasants; they served their indentures; and many of them staying on, they acquired after infinite toil both money and land. Their children continued to acquire; and the blacks, who had no such sustained power of toil, yielded up more and more. A Portuguese, dying in St. Kitts, left over a hundred thousand pounds. He owned the estate to which he had come out indentured. Another was a Member of Council in Antigua, and was cited as the island's benefactor.

Again at daylight we lay off Guadeloupe, where we entered the island-studded harbour of Pointe-à-Pitre. Here was a tropic land indeed! About the low shores grew a riot of vegetation, of palms here, of mangroves there, and behind them all the trees of the forest. The town itself lay half bowered. Avenues of hoary trees rose about it. Flamboyants shed their vermilion upon the roofs. In the country to the west, expanses of sugar grew; they seemed richer, more verdurous than any in the Caribbean Sea. On the uplands, across the vast bay, forests and plantations were seen, and the distant mountain mass of Soufriere, capped with mist.

It was a Sunday morning. The town was *en fête* for a religious festival, and decorated, and all the people were



about in their finery. In the better streets, to a greater number than I should have imagined, French ladies lined the balconies. They awaited the processions; and soon came the bishop, walking beneath his canopy, with escort of clergy, choristers and incense bearers, carriers of sacred banners, and of the flag of France. Following came religious deputations from the smaller towns. The parish priest, a Frenchman, would head these, chanting, and then there swept by, singing in response, a number of stylishly dressed negresses. These women were positively *chic*; and I realised that this Guadeloupe crowd, negro as it might be, was Parisian compared with the homely, uncouth figures who move about our own islands.

These French women on the balconies clearly set the style, and there were thousands of negresses in Pointe-à-Pitre that morning who had absorbed something of it. A few rose to silk; but if the most wore only cotton and prints, they carried them off, and their ample skirts swept the ground in the grand manner. The colouring was brilliant; the women's turbans lent a noticeable glamour to the scene. Where mourning was compulsory, it, too, was in keeping with the *fête*; the ruffs and swathings of crape looked to be extraordinarily rich.

Here was a negro community dressed up to the nines. Its keynote was a richness, an ebullience, clearly denoting a monetary ease; and that richness of verdure, that tropical ebullience I saw all about me, explained it. The French rule lightly. The coloured people under them are not unduly exploited. Neither do we, on neighbouring isles, exploit; yet our own blacks have not the spending power of Guadeloupe.

Again we sailed, and an afternoon's steaming brought us to one of those islands rising mountainous from the water's edge. Bold and serried, and one vast forest, the

peaks rose this evening into the mists; but as twilight drew on those lifted, and there was revealed, fresh and dripping, a panorama of the island's mountain side. It was the apotheosis of dark greens.

This island was Dominica. We lay that night off the little town, a speck beneath the mountains; and at day-break I climbed them, and was received for a time into their shade. Then I strayed into Roseau's botanic garden, which is not excelled this side of Rio; I heard disquisitions upon the lime, and upon Dominica's future, and was rowed aboard the steamer once more.

As you sail southwards, hardly have the mountains of Dominica receded, when those of Martinique rise from the sea; skirting her coast, a gulf is now entered, and after a voyage of less than five hours, the anchor drops.

Here is one of Nature's harbours—a bluff running out to sea; the which, taken hold of by France in 1673, becomes a vast mediæval fortress of cut stone. Thus originates "Fort de France" and here, under the shelter of its guns, grows up the capital town of Martinique.

History notes Fort de France as a town of culture and importance. Officialdom centred here. The fleet made it headquarters. Many wealthy planters lived on the cool uplands, at an easy ride from the town. Great personages of France passed to and fro. Madame de Maintenon lived here some years. Josephine de Beauharnais was reared on a plantation across the Bay.

These days were in the long ago. Martinique enjoyed her great period, and will live in history; but with the abolition of slavery she entered her twilight. No denser a twilight than other islands of this region were to enter, yet a real decadence, in which the cultured and still solvent drifted back to France; fine buildings of stone gave way to wooden shacks, and blacks and mulattoes entered into inheritance of the island's future.

Nature, at least, has stood by Martinique. Flamboyants shed their glory upon Fort de France. Wonderful trees grow about its precincts. The hills that rise around it are wooded and richly green; and on its savannah, where Empress Josephine stands in white marble, the palms rise a hundred feet high.

A typical French *chauffeur* stood by the hotel door. His machine was no town hack; and upon guarantee that it could face the mountains of the northern road, he found himself engaged for the morrow.

We pulled out at eight o'clock, and ascending to the uplands, reached a hog's back, five hundred metres high, where we travelled in cool air. The white planters of old are vanished from these uplands. The people one sees are black, or coloured; as at Guadeloupe, they assimilate the French style, but there was no vestige of the famed creole beauty. The road is wildly devious. At each turn a new vista of mountain, or valley, or leafy verdure, opens out, and presently we pass into a dense mountain forest. So we travel for an hour; and at last, descending to clearings and cultivation again, we see the ocean. Northward of us rises a solitary mountain mass. A mist encircles the summit, whilst its sides and all the country round are bare and dead. This is the volcano of Mont Pelée. Yonder strip of mud, a mile wide, which stretches from its cone to the seashore, was belched out on a day of 1902; and here, just below us, is Saint Pierre, that town of 30,000, which was asphyxiated that day, then blotted out.

Saint Pierre lay along the sea, which reaching, we pass into the Rue Victor Hugo, the one-time principal street, now cleared of its *débris*. The old walls rise in places. Here stood the cathedral, and there the theatre; a little further, the house of the wealthiest man. But in the

main there is obliteration, a volcanic *débris*, and over all a growth of rank verdure.

Dotted up and down the long street, to me the strangest sight of all, walked a matter of a hundred negroes. In their white clothes, among so much that was grey ruin, they stood out clear, and their walk was the leisurely stroll of residents. Their women, too, had formed a market, and at a spot by the shore offered their fruits and vegetables. But one solitary being had escaped the holocaust of 1902, yet here was the blotted-out spot almost animate again; and I thought of those scientists who, sterilizing a broth with infinite care, are presently witness of life's recrudescence.

Barbados, where I now headed, is an island of some twenty-one miles by fourteen, where is seen neither mountain nor forest, but a low-lying coral strand. Bridgetown, the port, is an open roadstead. The houses are painted; the streets, under their coral macadam, are pure white; the sun shines fiercely, and the glare is intolerable; yet there is plenty of business, a loading of sugar, a great carting of hogsheads of molasses, an overflowing negro life. Landward, across the whole island, the country rises in the gentlest slope, and is seen to be nearly destitute of trees. Where the soil is fertile, every acre lies under sugar cane; where thin and rocky, an immense number of the saddest little wooden houses are pitched. These are negro homes. As one approaches Bridgetown they increase in density. In its purlieus they achieve a nomenclature; and I passed by "Albertville," "Melville," and "Jehovah Jireh."

Barbados could just support her teeming population. In a lean year there was a deal of quiet suffering among the blacks, and the times were good indeed when men failed to grasp at a shilling a day. But these people love

their island, and do not willingly leave it. Living is cheap, and the climate healthy. The government is benevolent. The blessings of peace have rested on Barbados from the beginning, and a quiet philosophy is upon her people.

I passed on to Trinidad, where extreme tropic beauty is again seen. Standing on the savannah of Port of Spain, towards sunset, I looked out on a cameo of verdure as fair as anything on this earth.

At a stone's throw from Trinidad lies the Venezuelan mainland; and at a day and a half's sail, south, lies Georgetown, British Guiana. Beyond the interests of its surroundings—the wide Demerara River, the gloomy forests so near, the sugar lands, the rich vegetation—this town holds a great human interest. To work the sugar estates, in days gone by, government brought in many thousands of negroes, of Indian coolies, and of Portuguese from Madeira, whilst there was also a big influx of Chinese traders. To these add the aboriginal Indians, now greatly reduced in numbers, and the British themselves. These six races, brought together on the banks of this Guiana river, in a hot and luxuriant climate, have not failed to propagate. Miscegenation, unions of race with race, took place in infinite permutation, and the result to-day is shown in human blends which you will find nowhere else. Quite a number of individuals carry the blood of the six races, and there must be many in Georgetown who carry the blood of four. Despite it all, the young people grow up often physically attractive, and though brown as its sugar, think of Demerara, and Demerara only, as home. They, in their turn, breed apace; but being deeper in the grip of nature than in aught else, they often forget to marry. So many babies in Guiana are born out of wedlock, that the Anglican clergy are



put to inconvenience. In the cathedral of Georgetown (it is announced by leaflet) the children of the married will be christened on Sundays and Wednesdays; for the illegitimate, the Kingdom of Heaven is opened on Mondays only.

## CHAPTER XI

### UP AND DOWN EUROPE

THE Continent of Europe always attracted me. From the early German days, onward, the more I saw it, the oftener I returned. I have crossed to it by twenty-two routes, been in all the capitals, and know it well.

Each time I set out on a journey, be it but to-day's crossing from Dover, the old romance surges within me. I am going abroad! A new adventure—it matters not where—is about to begin! This evening, as I have been able to time the occasion, *Faust* will be sung at the Paris opera, and in the Brocken scene the ballet music will be danced in its entirety. To-morrow morning, this being late spring-time, I shall go out to see the chestnuts flowering at Versailles. In the afternoon, ascending to "trim Montmartre," I shall visit Heine's grave, and towards evening drive in the *Bois*. The question of dinner will be raised. If there is a lady in the case, she may plump for Paillard; if alone, all that is best in my palate will cry "Voisin!" although sometimes a small voice has whispered to me "the Café de la Paix."

Next morning I start for Nice. I do this in the month of May, when the world is hastening North from the Mediterranean. Nice and those Southern slopes are now in their prime; indeed, you may cross this sea to Algeria, to find May the month of months, and the whole earth carpeted with wild flowers.

Nice is nearly empty save for her own people. At the Palais de la Jetée final performances are being given, and

after many years I hear again my beloved *La Mascotte*. At the Casino Municipal, strolling from the tables, I watched a tall and magnificent man who led about a tattooed woman. He was six feet high, scented and curled; his evening clothes fitted to perfection, and he moved through the crowd with assured mastery and grace. "May I call your attention to this lady," he would cry, "*Elle a cent cinquante mille points de tatouage, en quatorze couleurs.*" To test reality, hairy hands are laid on her flesh, podgy fingers probe her back, her legs, her breasts; as he reaches for a bit of silver, or it may be a copper, he gives each donor a charming smile, and the courtly bow of a prince.

Sitting in the gardens of the Place Massena, each month of May, you will see several—it may be as many as half a dozen—young women of elegant appearance, looking strangely dejected. These are human wreckage of the Monte Carlo season. One afternoon, the music being ended, I ventured to address a handsome young woman of superior mould, who sat pensive and alone. She was Franco-American, spoke perfect English, and had just seen her protector go down in financial *débâcle*. She now spoke of opening a boarding house in some quiet street of Nice. A second case was that of a governess, or companion, well into the thirties, *passée*, but clever, and as good a talker as you will find. We walked into the hills behind Nice, passing the gardens of the carnation growers, and another afternoon I took her, by the tramway which wends round the coast, to Monte Carlo itself. We ascended by the cog-wheel to the heights of La Turbie, walking down through the olive woods into the town. As we neared the Casino she became excited, and when we stood before the tables, and I placed a *rouleau* of five-franc bits in her hand, this clever and experienced woman went to pieces. She gambled wildly, without any

thought, taking always the maximum of risk, and while the money lasted she was lost to her surroundings. Presently it was finished; whereupon, removing her shabby gloves, she took a purse from her pocket, and with trembling fingers drawing from it a *louis* and some silver—all that was left to her in the world—slapped them unavailingly upon the table.

Poor, *passée*, little woman! So that was the joint in her armour. A few weeks before, coming to Monte Carlo for the first time, she had there risked, and lost, her hoards of Frs. 16,000, and now she looked out on a desolate world. I had luck that day, and was able to replenish her purse with some eight *louis*. Had she not given me lessons in idiomatic French?

At Marseilles, I boarded the evening train for Spain. At four in the morning, just at the daylight, we came to the frontier. There changing carriages, and the Spanish train entering a long tunnel, you feel that at the other end of this all things will be different. "Here is the land of *mañana*," I said, as the train came out of the tunnel into Spain; it was just half past four, and as I looked out a band of peasants stood there tending their vines. I was to learn that the peasant of Spain, sleep as he may in the midday sun, works early, and works late, and judged as a peasant is rather an admirable person.

A young Englishman shared the compartment. He spoke Spanish, but I could not have placed him in a thousand guesses. He was in the mule trade, and journeyed to the mountains of Aragon to buy donkey sires. He sought animals of fourteen hands and over, receiving £80 for a fine beast laid down in London, and £100 for something exceptional; but spoke of competition from Kentucky, where donkeys are now bred from the best strains of Spain.

Later in the morning I reached Barcelona; where, to orient myself, I presently climbed Tibidabo, a hill 1750 feet high, standing at the outskirts of this considerable city. Barcelona is the business centre of Spain, her largest port, and a place with a personality. My hotel opened on the Rambla, a street of the greatest animation, its centre set apart for a flower market—which eclipsed Nice—and for the sale of caged birds. Just back from it stood the covered-in city markets, where a thousand women presided over the stalls, and not a man.

Across the Rambla from here, yet hidden from its crowds, is a high old Gothic church. Enter it, as I did, straight from the sunlight, grope along the darkened nave, then throw your gaze up. Wide Gothic arching will begin to take shape high above you, set with windows of stained glass; and I declare one of these, together with a rose window in the nearby cathedral, to be the finest flowers of the Gothic world. At the lower end of the Rambla, by the waterside, rises up a monument to Columbus, two hundred feet high. His great figure, standing upon it, dominates the spacious harbour, and is seen many miles out at sea. And well it may; first and last, the old Admiral has brought many a ship into Barcelona.

It was the feast of *Corpus Christi*; and in the bright sunshine of an afternoon I found myself, one of many thousands, entering the bull-ring. This was to be a great day. Special bulls of Andalusia were announced, a famous *torero* was to fight, and as I sat in the unshaded tiers, among the common people, I felt excitement gather in the air. An hour goes by. The vast *plaza* is crowded to suffocation. The band has played a martial air in the minor of Spain. The sellers of *caramelos* do a roaring trade. The sellers of lemonade and bottled beer are run off their legs. Hand-bills advertising a venereal remedy are thrown out by thousands. The band has played again.



The hour is at hand, and in the small chapel behind the ring the principals now partake of the Holy Eucharist. A bugle call rings out; and to music, the gay procession enters, passes before the president of the day, bows low, and goes out. The president rises in his box, takes up the key, and throws it into the ring. A moment later the *capeadores*—the wavers of the cloaks—have taken their stand, the mounted *picadores* point their lances, and the gate opens. At first there is nothing to be seen. A moment or two later, a bull comes strolling down the passage and enters the ring. He is mottled in colour, and looks undersized; he stands quite still, as if dazed and sulky. At ten paces distant a *picador* sits astride his wretched hack. He is clad in black velvet, feathers stream in his hat, his legs are encased in metal, and as he poises his lance you think it is Don Quixote and his Rozinante facing the windmills. The bull paws the earth, then shooting out an ugly glance, he charges. There is a shock. Man and horse fall to the ground, but the bull's horn has only glanced off the metal, and drawn no blood. The horse struggles to his feet. The *picador* is lifted again into the saddle. The bull, wounded by the lance, infuriated by the waving of bright cloaks, charges madly about the ring. Presently he sees horse and rider again. The *picador* is poising his lance as before. The horse, who cannot see for his blinkers, stands listening intently. The bull throws up his hind legs as if in frolic, then settling himself very low and square, he charges again. This time there is no shock. The group seems for some moments to be motionless. Then the *picador* slithers off on the far side, and walks away. The bull, standing back a yard, sulkily hangs his head. The horse has been gored in the main fore artery; a thick jet of blood is squirting out, and he turns his head to an extraordinary angle to watch it. His tail is wagging faster than any dog's. In

those seconds he is meditating his revenge. There is no kick left in him, but he lays his nose against the bull's hide, and tries with an awful futility to bite. Futility indeed! Undersized or not, the bull lifts him three feet in the air, shakes him, and drops him dead in his own blood.

A new horse is now ridden forward. Within ten seconds he has been gored in the belly, and his entrails come bulging through like a swelling balloon. His *picador* has vamoosed. The crowd, pleased with the quick work, take the bull into favour, who goes cavorting about, roaring with anger. Ignoring for once the waving cloaks, he suddenly charges a *capeador*, who only escapes by vaulting the barrier. There is a roar of delight. No one takes further stock of the horse, who is careering round and round the ring, the balloon wallowing at his side; attendants heading him off, he at last gallops through the exit, to be seen no more by men.

The second phase now begins. No more horses are seen in the ring; but young *banderilleros*, lithe and spangled, who must place two darts simultaneously in the bull, between the neck and the spine. This is a delicate and dangerous work, and the crowd, quick to respond, jump up in their places. The bull goes roaring and prancing. His back is gay with the pennants which stream from the darts. To-day a little known *banderillero* acquits himself as a great artist. Again and again, as the bull charges, he skips neatly aside, cool and contemptuous, and thrice places his darts in the flesh, exact to a hair's breadth. A crescendo of shouts greets him, and when he receives promotion to *matador* on the spot, there is long and deafening applause. He is the hero of the day. The famous *torero* acclaims him, presents him with the red cloak and sword, and motions him, as *espada*, to the final encounter. This is the climax of the fight.

The other men leave the ring. He stands there alone with the bull, for a fight to the death.

The vast audience, taut with excitement, crane over. He looks up at them and waves his hand. Standing in front of the president's box, he makes a courtly bow, dedicates this bull, and adjusting the red cloth, faces about. The bull sees him, and runs up to within six paces, where he stops short, pawing the ground. His eyes are glazed. He drips blood, and there is hell in his heart. Always from the corner of his eye he sees that red *muleta*. Now it is waved at him, now drawn across the ground, now coiled round the point of the *matador's* blade, who stands there challenging. The bull charges at last—and finds he has shot into space. He turns—and sees a laugh in the man's eyes. A roar has come from the people, and he looks up dazed into the sea of faces. His sight has nearly gone. He is weak from loss of blood. He is very weary; but he comes of a far-famed strain of fighters, and once more he squares himself for the charge. The man squares himself too. Taking a firm stand, he holds his rapier before him at arm's length, and points it straight between the horns.

There is a quiver all around the ring, and the bull charges. The *matador* seems hardly to move. But his weapon has been so well and truly poised that the bull has spitted itself; the blade is seen sticking deep in its spine. This has been a thrust of thrusts, dead straight, a triumph of nerve and eye; and the bull just gives a cough, looks quietly round about once or twice, and falls dead.

The great audience goes mad. Surging on the tiers, throwing thousands of hats in the air, crying loudly to heaven to witness this fight of fights, it raises a volume of sound that must reach to the Balearic Islands. The women wildly wave their shawls, their eyes glistening with the thrill of it. The men shout hoarsely, waving

their arms aloft, still crying to the upper regions; many hats, together with cigars, purses, and a shower of coins have been thrown into the ring, and a number of youths, climbing the barrier, rush to the *matador* and embrace him. The president waves congratulations; the band is seen to be playing a march of victory; in the press box ten men are writing for dear life, and the great news is about to be flashed over Spain.

The young fighter makes a triumphal progress round the ring. In accordance with custom, his step is now mincing, his manner grossly affected. He deigns to accept a fat purse they press on him, but with a wave of the arm makes over all else that is showered down to the inferiors who follow in his train. Why should he not? That mottled bull, which the caparisoned mules now drag out, gave him his chance, and he took it. He is a god in Spain for the rest of his life.

As I returned to the heart of the city, all the people of Barcelona were making for the Rambla, where an immense crowd was now standing. The splendid and stately religious procession of *Corpus Christi* was taking place. The church bells were tolling. Military bands, marching at intervals in the long parade, played slow and solemn music. High clerics moved past under their canopies, blessing the crowd; holy images were carried behind them, and as they went by all the people sank to their knees, many of them calling loudly upon the Virgin. There followed a lengthy train of the clergy, of choristers who chanted, of others who carried high, lighted tapers, of those carrying religious banners, of the military, and of the different religious orders of laymen, sedate and elderly, wearing evening dress, with rows of sacred medallions across their breasts.

The procession moved slowly, between long halts, and took two hours to pass. What with those who marched,



and those who knelt, and all the sacred concomitants, it had brought religious emotion to many thousands of people.

In that fine view from the summit of Tibidabo, it is not only Barcelona and the Mediterranean you see. There is an extended outlook over Catalonia. At no great radius you may count as many as eighty villages, and you will especially note, some thirty miles inland, the solitary mass of Montserrat rising from the plain. This mountain has been a shrine, and the site of a monastery for over a thousand years. It was called "Monsalvat"—Holy Mountain—in mediæval times, and became legendary as the resting place of the Holy Grail. You may now ascend to the monastery, which is become a school of sacred music, by a rack-and-pinion railway. It stands in a deep cleft, high up the mountain mass. Bold and fantastic rock formations lie around it, but in and about the cleft is a maze of pine trees, and thick undergrowth, and a mountain stream rushes down. Exploring these precincts, I came out on a great natural terrace of the mountain. Both above it and below there seemed a sheer face of rock; but here was a grassy and wooded ledge carpeted with wild flowers, and towards its farther end a natural grotto, where ferns were growing, and moisture dripped from the roof. The old monks, I saw, had led their water along here by a pipe. I pictured them, on mellow afternoons a thousand years ago, and on mellow afternoons down through the centuries, lying among the wild flowers as I now lay, with the wooded strip at my back, great stretches of Catalonia and Aragon beneath me, and in the far North the snowline of the Pyrenees.

There is no happiness unalloyed. The alloy in mine, as I lay there on the high terrace of Montserrat, concerned Richard Wagner, and a matter of topography. I



was a student at Stuttgart; and a memorable journey to Bayreuth, to see *Parsifal*, had opened a new world to me. Anything which touched that would interest me all my life, and here was something touching it closely. Wagner laid the scene of *Parsifal*, which centres around the Knights of the Holy Grail, on "Monsalvat, among the Northern mountains of Gothic Spain." This was Monsalvat. But I was realising that Wagner could never have been here, that the country he portrayed was legendary as the Grail itself. In my mind's eye I knew the Domain of the Grail very well indeed. I thought of the Castle of the Knights as set upon a mountain side, facing north—as it might be this nearby monastery; but I also saw, in my mind, a rolling territory of many miles, park-like in places, but mostly forest, and set with deep lakes. I thought of Gurnemanz, in the days of his hermitage, living as far as forty miles from the castle, and of Kundry as coming from a remoter country still. Then there was the castle of Klingsor. Did it not lie on the Southern slopes, facing "Arabian" Spain, and at a considerable distance away? How was I to reconcile that stately Bayreuth territory, which my mind had since so embellished, with this place? How would Wagner himself have reconciled it? This mountain mass of Montserrat was a wild and truly romantic spot; but it was small in area, precipitous, not much like the spacious and afforded domain of the Grail than the Rambla of Barcelona. This castle in Spain had come tumbling down; and so I was sad.

I have not been a second time to Bayreuth, but up and down Germany I saw great performances of Wagner. There was *Tristan* at Vienna, where, all things considered, they have the best opera in the world. There was *Meistersinger* in Dresden, which is only second to Vienna.

One summer week I went to the Prinz Regenten Theatre at Munich, for the *Ring*, and *Siegfried* took its place in my brain as the greatest of them all. Then I was in Wiesbaden, and on a certain day read that *Der Fliegende Holländer* would be sung that evening at Frankfort. It is a short journey there from Wiesbaden, and I steamed into the great Frankfort station at five o'clock; being mid-winter it was dark, and it was snowing heavily. I had spent days in this rich Jewish centre twenty-five years before, journeying to Stuttgart; but the brilliantly lit city I came into out of the dark, whose thronged streets I was now pacing, was one I had never seen before—I could have sworn it!

I found my way to the *Frankfurter Hof*. I would have a dinner meet for a great occasion, and ordered blue trout, a saddle of hare, and a vintage bottle of *Graacher*. Rich Jews were dining all around me, their women sparkling with jewels; and outside it was snowing. I had hardly sipped a glass of the wonderful wine, when all the melodies of the opera broke loose in my head. This snow! It was a very proper setting for the Dutchman, storm-tossed on the coast of the Baltic Sea. His haunting cry rose; my blood ran cold as the overture developed, and there came the crash of the thunder, the rise and fall of the storm. Now I was come to the song of Senta, which she sings in Bergen, and I had last heard in the forests of Ashanti. There, at the gold mines, had been a gramophone, and as we sat sipping our quinine before dinner, so had she sung to us, and fire-flies had come out of the forest.

I lived it over again at the crowded opera, among the rich and comfortable burghers, then stole out of Frankfort in the dark, even as I had entered. It was midnight when I came to Wiesbaden, so heavily snowing that the station yard stood bare and lifeless.

A letter came at this time from an old Transvaal friend that I should visit him in Darmstadt. We walked along the *Bergstrasse*, sampling the local wine of each village, through the extensive woods which lie about the capital and into the Grand Ducal forest, where we put up wild boar from their lair. One day walking in the forest, Von Hofmann said to me: "Would you like to see the death-mask of Shakespeare? It is in Darmstadt."

I said, "Shakespeare's death-mask in Darmstadt? Of course." An hour later, from a quiet street, we entered the villa of Dr. Becker, and presently I stood before a plaster-cast, which lay on a black velvet cushion.

There lived at Cologne once, the Count of Kesselstadt, a dignitary of the Roman Church, a great antiquarian, who, from one of his visits to England, returned with a gem. This was the well attested and only death-mask of the Bard of Avon, upon which, so long as the Count lived, he set the highest value. He died; and while his collection became dispersed to the ends of Europe the death-mask disappeared. It was at last unearthed, in the forties of the last century, in an old junk shop in Mainz. Its discoverer, the grandfather Becker, tracing its history with love and care, won for it the recognition of British and German authorities; and since the family came to Darmstadt, it has reposed, prized above rubies, as the family heirloom.

The mask, which now held me magnetized, was that of a small—one might almost say a tiny—head, with a markedly sloping forehead, bald over the forehead, with a sort of Wellington nose, and a small imperial. But the forehead! Narrow across the eyes, receding, it yet opened out to a perfect dome, to one which, as you gazed, seemed to suggest immensity. It was wonderful, beautiful; and I stared at it perhaps half an hour. That this relic was the true death-mask of Shakespeare I did not

doubt; that it lay there in Darmstadt, and not in Stratford, made me sad.\*

If the East was revealed in a night's vigil off Ceylon, the glamour of music opened up Northern Europe to me. At the Tivoli pleasure garden, in Copenhagen, there is one of the finest string orchestras, and its playing of an item one summer night, to a boy of seventeen who listened, set his mind agog. It was the Minuet of Boccherini, rendered in perfection.

I did not find myself in Copenhagen again for many years; but again it was a summer's night, and this time, in a state of expectancy, I entered the famous garden. They were playing "*Ase's Death*." This was no light and airy melody of the Mediterranean, but the deep, sad music of the North, and these men of the North were just playing it with their soul. The great audience hung breathless upon the music—each one dying his own death, moving through forests to his burial, seeing the winters come, and snow upon his grave; and I, who stood there dead and buried with them, came in those moments to my comprehension of Scandinavia.

The underlying sadness of the Northland—it is not misery—does not come to the surface these days of summer; while they last, let us make for Norway and Sweden and Finland. As you pass up the mainland of Denmark you see it to be flat, a grazing land, a country of dairy farms with their immense byres; rows of milch cows, of the Danish breed, stand tethered in the fields, groomed and blanketed, and there is everywhere a great making of hay.

\* When I returned to England, I called upon the first authority on Shakespeare; I said, "Do you know about the Kesselstadt mask?" "Yes. But I decided to reject it as not authentic." I said, "Have you seen it?" "No." "Will you come with me to Darmstadt and look at it?" "No. I have printed my opinion; I cannot reconsider it."



After crossing the Cattegat, you will want to linger in Gottenburg, Christiania, Bergen; they will seem to you cleaner, sweeter, more reasonably ordered than the cities you have lived in, and the lives of the people, too, more reasonably ordered. There is such leisureliness, such quiet comfort; the food is so good; it is so well cooked, so politely served. There are drives about the countryside, revealing a wealth of old trees and wild flowers. There are city gardens where you may dine, where you may sit these long evenings, hearing fine music. Everywhere there is a pure air, gracious, well-ordered people, a philosophy of life; but for the strange tongue they speak, this would be one's elysium.

I sailed out of Bergen one evening by coastal steamer, heading North, and thereby passed into a region of *fjords*, girt with mountain and waterfall, where small communities dwell on the lowland patches, fishing, hay-making, supplying the summer tourists with lodgment and a courtesy beyond compare. Further North, we sailed inside a chain of islands, calling at the fishing village of Svolvær in the Lofodens, several times a day heading far up a sound to some small settlement. The days had lengthened at Copenhagen. Last night I sat reading on deck at midnight, and this morning we cross the Arctic Circle. Lying here, upon a *fjord*, is the village of Mo, where I landed for an hour, and entering the woods, presently lay down among wild flowers, fresher and more thickly growing than I had ever seen. At two o'clock the next morning, in the broad daylight, I landed at Narvik. Walking down the silent street there came two school girls of twelve years old, and up the silent street an elderly mechanic, who, passing, gravely saluted femininity with raised hat. It seemed there were great gentlemen in the Arctic.

In Swedish Lapland, not so far inland from Narvik,



are deposits of the finest iron in the world; and in this region too, you will see Lapps encamped, with their reindeer, a nomadic and harmless tribe. From the iron mines and the arctic *tundra*, a railway took me in a day and a half, down through the never-ending forests, through the heart of Sweden, to Stockholm.

And now, in this summer time, we are in *the* city of Europe. Not but that Stockholm has her winter charm: I have skated here, walked through the white forests, been to the Opera in snow-shoes, and give winter its due; but I know her in summer to be unmatched. Forests surround Stockholm. All about the city lie stretches of water, and you find she is half built upon islands, which extend, wild and wooded, down to the open Baltic. It is glorious to be sailing out of Stockholm on an evening. Thus have I sailed out for Gothland, that island far down the Baltic, coming there in the early morning. Several times, too, I have sailed at eventide for Finland. For hours, after supper, I have watched the vessel thread her way among a hundred wooded islands; and sought my bed at midnight, between the freshest of sheets, noting the long twilight, the pure air, and the deep peace of these northern regions.

By next afternoon, never having lost sight of islands, you reach Helsingfors, capital of Finland, another city surrounded by forests. Here you come across a people notably sad; and when you realise that their city is poor, and themselves drab looking, you feel that an illusion is gone. But do not judge hastily. This country is a maze of forests and lakes, threaded by small steamers; and as the days pass, and you journey from lake to lake, or are driven through the forests, meeting the people in their homes, you will say that Finland is a lovable country, and the sad Finns a deeply feeling, enlightened people. There is real civilisation in these

forests—just as there is real civilisation throughout Scandinavia.

I have in these few pages but touched the fringe of the Europe I know; memorable days and scenes crowd my mind faster than I can set them down. There were those walks in the country behind Vigo. There was Cintra, lying among oaks; whence a road wound up the mountain to a Moorish fort, and still up, to a Moorish palace built upon the crags—a palace of fairyland. There were afternoons in Seville, lying under oleanders in the gardens of the Alcazár, near Moorish fountains, all set about with tiles. In the evenings I sat in the *plaza* of San Fernando, under the palms, under the cloudless sky, and watched the women of Seville go past. There you see, as elsewhere in Spain, the slender Madonna type, and the thoroughly fat, stepping right masterfully, a gulf between them. Each evening, in the cool, some dozens of young girls collected here, and to the rhythmic snapping of castanets danced long and gracefully, dispersing at the stroke of eleven.

In the witching month of October, upon a god-like afternoon, I lay on the sands of the Lido, over against Venice. As I entered my gondola, to return to the city, the air became strangely balmy, while the lagoons lay in a glassy calm. Presently the sun was setting. Over the water, I think from Malamocco, came the tolling of that deep bell—that sweetest toned bell in the world—and if ever the peace of God rested on earth, it rested at that moment. We were passing a small island. Upon the island stood an old barrack-like building, and as we glided by, in the twilight, a long wail, formless and ghastly, stole from it. Badly shocked, I raised myself from the cushions. "They are the *furiosi*," said the gondolier, tapping his head. The great building was an

asylum—an asylum for the violently insane; the formless and dreadful wail was their raising of the evening hymn.

I sat on the cliffs at Capri, and while distant Vesuvius smoked, pondered over the Roman Catholic Church; and again, beneath the cypresses at the Villa D'Este, almost within sight of St. Peter's dome, I thought of this: Here were Italy, Spain, Portugal and the rest, rich and fertile countries to the eye, yet deadly poor, and I asked myself the why and wherefore. Was it not the religion? In the Middle Ages these countries, obsessed by Romanism, locked up their money in cathedrals, and churches, and shrines, and monasteries, which yielded no return, and thereby diverted it from irrigation, and mill races, and reclamation of wastes, and forestry, and ships, and trading, and those channels where it would have returned a profit right down through the centuries. They also withdrew the best and most active brains from the state to become celibates—clergy and monks and nuns; so that to-day, in the natural flow of cause and effect, we see these states suffering from economic anæmia.

The economies of Rome have been unsound. (Indeed I am authorised to state that God is tired of bricks and mortar; but contrite hearts are welcome as usual.) On the other hand, her missionaries to the heathen—or to be exact, the Jesuit missionaries in particular—are the best I have known; in some ways I think of them as the salt of the earth. One may picture them as tall, bearded men, of a full habit—Belgians, Frenchmen, Alsatians mostly, speaking a limpid French—and I see them in sun helmet and dustcoat, or a suit no longer white, striding the torrid roads of Africa, India or China, regardless of fever and heat. These are highly educated, subtle men, masters, too, of several crafts, which they teach thoroughly, who, pledged by the solemnest of vows, go

out eagerly to their labours, and settle down there for life.

It is the fate of foreign missions to achieve less than they think. Let it at least be said the Jesuits turn a native into a practical craftsman, even if he remain a poorish Christian.

It is but a short journey from Venice into the pleasant country of Austria. Passing slowly up the valley of Tyrol, you see unfold swiftly running river, brown-roofed, immemorial villages, well-kept vineyards and orchards; upon the hillsides peasants are stacking their hay; higher up, many milch cows are grazing, and the sound of their bells is borne to you; far up the slopes you see where the forests begin. The forests of Austria are her glory. They belong to the state, or to the great territorial magnates, and in their depths stand castles and shooting boxes. Wild boar lurk in these, and deer abound; on the flat lands between Salzburg and Vienna, after ploughing, I have counted hares by the hundred, and an Austrian nobleman, issuing with his guests from his castle, used to shoot as many as a thousand in a day. With it all, the chase in this joyous country was not after these. Each Austrian of leisure, were he nobleman, army officer, or *bourgeois*, spent his life running after women, and for many years thinking of little else under the sun. This characteristic accounts for a certain national futility—as we measure futility. But I am not prepared to moralise. Austrian women are most alluring; Austrian men may be exceedingly wise in their generation.

As you travel Northward and Eastward, the forests pass. Here is Hungary, and we stand at the fringe of that food belt which covers Eastern Europe. The land is a plain. The soil is black and deep and renowned

for its wheat. Order yourself a meal at some country inn, and you will find the bread the whitest and most delicious you have ever eaten. The soil is richest in Hungary; but these plains, leaping the barrier of the Carpathians, extend Northward into Poland, a food producing country of magnitude. I have passed through Poland when it seemed one field from end to end—a mosaic of wheat and oats and hay and tares and beets and sunflowers—and round about the smiling homesteads such a wealth of fat geese, that three thousand were daily driven across the frontier, for marketing in Germany.

Eastward, the food growing belt extends through much of Roumania; it covers Bessarabia, and much of the Ukraine; from the heights at Odessa I looked over the wheat plain lying North of the Black Sea.

Somewhere between the forests and the wheat plains, drawing, it may be, inspiration from each, a stream of genius flows through Central Europe. It is the genius of music, the genius, in particular, of the violin. The stream wells out strongly in Poland, flows swift and deep through Bohemia, and courses through the slavic belt into Hungary. Somewhere east of Budapest it loses itself. Throughout Roumania, a thousand *tzigane* fiddlers seek to recreate it; furiously they draw their bows, stamp the feet, raise the eyes to heaven; but genius is not in their strings.

Poles, Czech, Slav, Magyar, Jew blend their music in this stream. It has given to the world Chopin, Moszkowski, Dvorák, Liszt, Rubinstein; a succession of prodigies; many *virtuosi*; many great singers; above all it is forever replenishing the world's stock of talented violinists—nature's violinists, hundreds and hundreds of them, who spring to life in this belt as thrushes spring to life in an English coppice.



An eminent metallurgist and myself, inspecting gold mines in Transylvania, were hailed in the market place of Verespatak. A fine and courtly Hungarian, the leading man of the district, saluting us, announced that we were his guests. "Gentlemen," he said in German, "you will find me poor company. My dear wife, the apple of my eye, is dead these nine months, since when I have had little pleasure in life. While she lived, I was a great man for the ladies; but will you believe me, I have not even cared to go with a woman since she died. But you shall eat well, and drink our Hungarian wine, and my cook shall make you coffee such as you have never tasted."

About the market place of the small hill town, peasants in their rough sheepskin coats stood, each with a lambkin or two, the table delicacy of these regions. With a wave of the arm our host indicated his choice; which was despatched on the spot, and the carcase, together with other fresh foods, sent homewards. We were now guided to the mining deposits of Verespatak—hills of gold-bearing rock, quarried and honeycombed to a degree—and known to have been mined since the days of the Roman Empire. These are still worked, yielding a bare profit; and we drove down the valley, where, in small batteries belonging to the miners themselves, and driven by rude water-wheels, two thousand wooden stamps were pounding the ore.

When we reached our host's house, we found it in charge of a peasant couple, man and wife, elderly, extremely fat and illiterate, but knowing the Austrian cooking, and the occasion, I had no fears. We sat down to a memorable dinner, gorging from a whole roasted lamb, and other choicely cooked foods, and gulping draughts of Hungarian wine. At length, when we ate no more, the proud boast of the Hungarian recurred to

me, and "With reference to that coffee?" I murmured. As I spoke, the immense old woman entered, bearing long glasses of coffee and milk, prepared God alone knows how. I had drunk the finest coffees of the world, prepared by master hands, yet this excelled them all; it was the elixir of life. I was translated. Tears came to my palate. I raised my long glass to my host, and shook him by the hand. Here was such perfection as to call for homage, and my arm assayed to encircle an elephantine waist. "*Der Engländer hat mich gekusst!*" shrieked the delighted fat woman to her spouse.

Our host now prayed us to visit his copper "prospect" in the mountains, an hour's drive distant. At the end, there was a hill to climb on foot. Its near slope, treeless, lay in the warm afternoon sun, all green with the greenness of April, yet when we dropped over the crest, suddenly the sun was gone, three feet of snow lay on the ground, and we entered a dark and steep forest of pines. Here lay the "prospect," and lighting our candles, we entered the tunnel. It took me just ten seconds to value that mine; after a perfunctory interval, our kindly Hungarian babbling loudly of his "bonanza," I performed on him the unhappy despatch.

We set out from Verespatak at the twilight, clattering down the valley of the wooden stamp mills in a barouche. A long drive lay ahead, and in the darkness, after a day of vivid enjoyment, the eminent metallurgist and myself sang the *Yeoman of the Guard* from beginning to end. A telegram had been despatched about us, and at our journey's end we were received in state at the inn.

As we supped, a band of strolling *tzigane*, hearing of our presence, entered the inn, and playing long and frenziedly, were rewarded with gold. The good looking *stubenmädchen*, seated between us, plied our glasses the while, and midnight found us as mellow as could be.

Out of Fiume, that port on the Adriatic, steamers sail each day for the coast of Dalmatia. Some hundreds of miles down this coast, inside a mountain-locked harbour, is the town of Cattaro, whence I ascended by a remarkable road to the mountain tops, 4,000 feet high. Upon these tops lies Montenegro. A sea of rocky hills stretches before you; at each twist and turn of the road there opens out a tiny valley, with perhaps an acre of green grass, a hungry potato patch, a stone built hovel, through whose thatch there comes oozing peat smoke, and pigs lying about the door—for all the world like the poorest stretches of Ireland.

The inhabitants of this land will surprise you. The men seem mostly six feet high, are dark for choice, and bear themselves haughtily. Each one wears the zouave, which is often red, with loose knickers, and thick stockings to the knees; each one carries his rifle, and a filled bandolier is slung across his chest. The women seem to be all five feet ten; they too wear the red zouave, and are of a superb carriage. Some are dark, others of a radiant fairness. Here is a beauty whose hair hangs in thick plaits; and you could just twine it round your neck, and half strangle yourself, were it not for that man over there with a rifle, and a hundred cartridges. For several hours yet you drive through these wastes, until a larger valley is reached, and here stands the capital, Cettinge. As I walked down the village street—for Cettinge is no more than a large village—I mused upon the poverty of this State, the desolation of these mountains, the meagreness of this little spot. So keenly did I realise its meagreness, that when a family coach, drawn by two stout horses, upon whose box seat sat two retainers in their red zouaves, came ambling up the street, I suffered a mild shock. A moment later I had raised my hat. The stout, elderly King and Queen—he

in his little flat cap, red vest, and knickers like all the rest—were taking their afternoon drive. The Montenegrins, primitive and highly unstable like all the Balkans, are the handsomest race in the world. When I went into Serbia, whose people are of the same blood, I saw splendid individuals too; but these lowlanders, better fed and better sheltered though they be, are not comparable with the Montenegrins. Nor do these racial looks pass over the frontier of Bulgaria.

I came to a city where, at six o'clock in the morning, the sun shone hotly into my room. By seven, it seemed to be high noon, vibrating heat and sunlight; I pressed the bell, and a swarthy person took my well considered order for breakfast. I was in Athens. It was the hot season, and I had this—one of the best of hotels—nearly to myself. My room overlooked the central square, and the rising ground where stood the palace. The waiter, returning, now set before me a classic meal. There was coffee, made with the strength of Brazil, and the fragrance of Costa Rica; rolls of yesterday's baking, with fresh butter; and the thick, strained honey of Mount Hymettus, flavoured from the wild thyme, than which there is none finer.

I presently set out to see Athens. Half a mile away, rising at the city's outskirts, is the Acropolis. Upon it stands the Parthenon, and lesser temples, and for a mile around rise many famous monuments of antiquity. On a nearby slope are hewn rock dwellings, among them a cave that was the prison of Socrates; and here the wisest of men drank the cup of hemlock. From the Acropolis, Athens lies spread out in the bright sunshine—a city of whitewash, not unlovely, girt too with groves of trees; but the enveloping Attic plain, and the distant mountains are now dry and arid.

And on that afternoon I drove. My way lay across the arid plain; and not far from the city, by a grove of olive trees, I halted awhile. Here had lived Akademos, owner of this land, which he presently sold for a scholastic site to one Plato, and so perpetuated his name to all generations. Across the plain you now see the bay of the Peiræus, port of Athens, and as you drive onward, another bay, Salamis, where the Greek and Persian fleets fought for the mastery of the seas. After several hours' driving, temple ruins are seen upon the rising ground, and you have arrived at the sacred site of the Eleusinian mysteries. As you return across the plain, the great heat of the day has passed, the dense blue faded from the sky. Soon a balm falls upon the air, the light softens swiftly, and you realise that the violet encirclement of Athens, her evening glory from time immemorial, is descending. Strangely violet becomes now the outline of the Acropolis, with its temples, the long slope of Hymettus, the more distant Mount of Pentelicus, where they quarry the marble; violet every ridge and horizon, and the wide surface of the Attic plain. Thus you drive into enchantment, into the peace that is past understanding; and when the day fades, and night falls, you will say with the dying Socrates, "I await immortality or annihilation with a mind equally untroubled and at rest."



## CHAPTER XII

### ARCHANGEL TO ASTRACHAN

ONE month of July there came the thought: "This summer I must sail down the Volga;" and after studying the map I said: "I shall cross Russia from Archangel to Astrachan." A steamer was leaving Leith upon a voyage to Iceland and Spitzbergen. Afterwards, she could land me at Hammerfest, and I should reach Archangel by way of the Murman Coast. This was right as could be, and I set out for Edinburgh. In Berwickshire I halted awhile, making for a certain spot in the Lammermoor Hills. I had not been in my own country for ten years. I had not been in these parts, where I roamed so often as a boy, in a far longer time.

And here I was, lying out on the heather once more! I lay on Rawburn, above Evelaw. The sun shone. The heather was dry. The patches of bell-heather glowed with a deeper colour, as I remembered they used to glow. The black-faced sheep still viewed one in affright. The Twinlaw Cairns still rose on their solitary mounts. But it was the calling of grouse all around me—the two sharp cries, then the mirthless cadence dying away—which carried me really back. I remembered just such an afternoon nearly thirty years before. It was a Sunday, and I was bound two miles across the moor, to take tea with a shepherd. I had lain down at this very spot, and while the grouse called, had taken stock of the heavens and the earth—especially of how a boy might encompass the earth; and as the tea hour loomed I had

gone on again, heading as for Longformacus. The old shepherd, a man of saintly character, had sat reading his Bible. His bonnet and plaid hung behind the door. His collies lay under the family bed. The guid-wife, careful and troubled, had laid the table. She set thereon the ornate company teapot, the big three-cornered scones—Saturday's baking on the griddle—a Selkirk bannock, her own cream and butter, cheese, and a skep of heather-honey, and when the saintly shepherd had asked a blessing, we fell to. But the shepherd and his wife were dead—these many years . . . and I the most travelled man in Scotland . . . and the grouse were calling—calling. . . . Had *all* our Scotch folk lain out on the heather and spun their web? There were such thousands of them abroad—up and down the earth! Everywhere I had found just ten times as many as their proportion. No spot was too remote. No new settlement seemed to go forward without them. I thought proudly of all the Scotch in the East. How Scottish the Indian Civil Service! And the Indian Army! How entirely Scotch, from the top of Ochterlony's Monument, downward, the City of Calcutta! Burma was but an annex of Glasgow, and the plantations of India and Ceylon the close preserve of the Highlands. Scotsmen cut the teak in Siam, did the biggest trading in China; every steamer East of Suez carried Scotch engineers, every bank and counting-house a Scotch manager and staff; and a thousand remote concerns, trusting their all to some proved man of balance, had installed a Scotsman in control. And as the Scotch were in the East, so were they in the North, and the South, and the West—a tower of strength to the British people. I shall be just, though it be to my own despatch. We do not throw up the very greatest of the race: Newton, Shakespeare, Cromwell, Darwin, Nelson, Milton,

Bacon, Clive, Harvey, were Englishmen. Nor do we throw up so talented an average as the Jews. Our national vice is strong drink, and many succumb; but by proved standards the Scotch are trustworthy, and of balanced ability, before all the races of men.

And so I presently sailed from Leith, and came next day to Kirkwall, in the Orkney Islands. From the roof of the parish church of St. Magnus, a building of great age, one viewed a town of blue-grey stone, lying at the head of an arm of the sea, and a treeless country of tilled farms. These Arcadian Scotch traced back to the Norse. Their faces expressed individuality. Their gravestones, clustered about this church, expressed it after their death. One read: "Burial ground of James Scarth of Cursiter," "Family tomb of the Marwicks of Saviskail," while a stone specified that Jane, wife of a Kirkwall draper, had died upon a certain Monday, her draper following her two years later, upon a Wednesday—all precise data for resurrection morn. Also, I paid sixpence to see the church.

Next morning we lay off another small town at the end of an arm—off Thorshaven, in the Faroe Islands, the ancient dependency of Denmark. Here it was treeless too, but steep and rocky; wooden houses were perched about the rocks, and a stream rushed steeply down the street. Blond islanders stood about the wharf; they looked strangely pale and melancholy, and one saw in a flash what the stormy sea, and much rain, and lonely winters, and eternal diet of fish made of men. A rush of fair-haired children came out of the school, happy and careless; but you knew that later on they must tread the track of their pale and buffeted elders. The industries of Faroe are whaling, cod-fishing—on all sides you see strings of fish set out for drying—and the collecting of

birds' eggs and feathers; save for poorish potato patches I saw no agriculture, nor any sheep upon the stony hills. I walked up from Thorshaven on to a barren moorland. Some peat carriers, descending with their loads, passed me; save for them, I was alone with the whistling curlews and the gathering rainclouds.

We steamed out of Thorshaven, passing among other islands of the group. Evening of the next day found us in sight of the mountains of Iceland. The sea lay strangely calm, the sun was warm, the air mellow; so perfect an evening was but seldom seen in these parts. Thousands of sea-birds, mostly eider duck, rested on the water, flying silently away at our approach. A couple of trawlers steamed homeward with their catch. The sun set at a quarter past ten; when I sought my berth, at half past eleven, it was still daylight. By morning we were anchored in the bay of Reykjavik, where Iceland's capital, with its 8,000 people, lay by the sea. The barren, lava-strewn country behind it rose to the interior, where snow-capped mountain ranges loomed, and Hecla, the smoking volcano; but it seemed a grassless waste, and nowhere was there vestige of a tree.

Landing, I again found myself among the Norse—blond people, intelligent rather than good-looking, a resemblance running through all. The melancholy cast was fainter here. The wooden houses were brightly painted; I passed by the Government buildings, the Parliament House of Iceland, a museum, and statues to Thorwaldsen and Sigurdsen, natives of the island. The town was enjoying its brief summer. Flags were flying. Pony races were advertised for that afternoon, and for the next day a concert, where I was to hear the finest singing of folk songs. One saw no gardens, but behind each closed window geraniums and begonias blossomed;

I wondered if the windows made a showing through the long winter. Winter days and evenings in Iceland were times of study. This remote people were not only voracious readers, but students and thinkers, many of them grounded in science. Nor were they of yesterday. This was the kingdom of Thule, with its sagas, its poets and explorers, its history that stretched back for a thousand years.

Outside the town, cattle fed on the sparse pasture. A mile beyond, smoke was rising from the hot springs, where the washerwomen of Reykjavik were assembled; the lonely track to the interior led by here, and trains of shaggy ponies passed, laden with their packs. Looking seawards from here, I saw on a promontory the lazaretto; there were lepers in Iceland.

Continuing her voyage, the vessel sailed up the Isa Fjord, between frowning cliffs; then to the open sea again, passing a steam whaler, harpoon fitted, at whose side hung a whale, white and corrugated. A fiery red sunset lay upon the water till half-past eleven. Next morning we entered a sheltered *fjord*, anchoring before Akureyri, the second town of Iceland, with 2,000 inhabitants, where, under the hills, long grass grew, and the haymakers were out.

Quitting Iceland now, heading northeast, we crossed a few miles out the Arctic Circle. A day later, in bitter weather, we sailed by uninhabited Jan Meyen—a mountainous island of rock, snow, and ice, stern and forbidding, and rarely seen for fog; many seabirds were flying under the cliffs, whilst the heights, as I watched, became hidden in the drifting snow. It was growing ever colder. There came another cloudless day, and that midnight the sun shone; but a deep and pervading loneliness now lay over the sea. Next evening we anchored in Smerenberg Bay, Spitzbergen.



This was No-Man's Land. We lay near the north end of Spitzbergen, just on the eightieth degree, six hundred miles from the Pole. Only bare mountains, glaciers and snowfields met the eye, and one marvelled that even for these few weeks—Gulf Stream or no Gulf Stream—a vessel could penetrate so far and not meet the sea of ice.

Into these lonely bays, in long ago summers, came British, French and Dutch whalers, who, finding whales in plenty, had there fought each other for the grounds. Many had fallen, and received rude burial upon these shores. In Magdalena Bay, three hundred years ago this very summer, British whalers had fought the ships of the Noordsche Maatschappij, of Amsterdam; and many Dutch had been killed.

I landed in Magdalena Bay. There grew, beyond its rocky strand, patches of a yellowish moss—the only vegetation. At a short distance rose the mountains, with their ice-fields, and across the *fjord* the vertical cliffs of glaciers, blue and veined, over which flowed cascades from the melting ice, sparkling as they fell. And on the strand, all about me, lay the bones of the Dead Dutchmen. One saw they had been buried in boxes, very shallow, and that the storms of the centuries had cast them up to bleach.

The sun had shone; but all in a moment, as I stood alone there, a dense fog blew up, and wrapped itself thickly round me. The distant steamer vanished. The landscape was blotted out. I could not see ten yards. A moment more, and I could see nothing at all. With it came such a bitter cold as chilled to the marrow; heavily wrapped as I was, I stood there benumbed, peering all about. Somewhere in the fog a shot was fired, and then many shots; they were the glaciers cracking, a mile away. Dreadful groans reached me, echoing and re-

echoing, as the mountain masses of ice met and closed with one another. The breeze freshened; the cold became intense; the dense fog stung my eyes and my nostrils. Then up the *fjord*, between the cliffs, came a great gust, and borne upon it a strange volume of sound. It may have been the sighing and whistling of the wind, the shots and groans reverberating from cliff to cliff, but to me, who stood there as good as blind, it was a great singing. And indeed, I knew what it was! In my hand I held a skull; bones lay at my feet; it was the Dutch whalers, singing in the "Last Chantey."

Loud sang the souls of those dead and bleaching  
Hollanders,

"Don't you forget *us*, Lord!  
We're the Noordsche Maatschappij;  
We've been lying up at '80'  
Stark on the *tundra*, Matey,  
Three hundred years come Michaelmas—  
And *we* never scorned the Sea!"

The wind changed after a while. The fog lifted. The sun shone, and the glaciers and icefields sparkled once more. I looked about me almost fearfully. I looked again and again; but of those who had sung in the fog I could see no vestige. Replacing the skull on the ground, I started to walk to the boat.

Hammerfest—a small wooden town, on a sheltered harbour—lay at the base of steep hills. A centre of the fishing, its warehouses were in these weeks filled with dried cod, which a number of Russian schooners from Archangel were here to carry away. In the hills above the town pours a torrent which never freezes. This had been harnessed; and at each few yards in the streets powerful arc lights hung, making Hammerfest the best lit spot in Europe. Now, in the unceasing daylight, I was

not to see it lit, but I conjured up those months of the unending night. I thought of fishermen tossing out there in the bitter cold, of some great haul in the dark, of laden boats groping for port, of their suddenly rounding yon black headland, and sighting the little town ablaze with light.

Each January, a great fishing fleet assembles off the Lofoden Islands, where fifteen to twenty thousand men cast their nets in the continuous darkness. Later in the season they follow the fish—which are mostly cod, with haddock and halibut—to the North, passing Tromsø, Hammerfest, and the North Cape, and by April and May, when the days are already long, are fishing the grounds to the northeast of Norway. The village of Vardo then becomes headquarters. This little place, which I had now reached by a coastal boat, handles in those months vast quantities of fish. The season was now over, and the fleet dispersed; but the take had been sixty-five thousand tons, and Vardo had handled the greater part. In the main street lay a pile of cods' heads; ten feet high, and many yards in length, it filled the village with a dreadful stench. On the wharf, they worked upon a mass of cods' livers, expressing their oil; and the fresh, cloying effluvium from these was no less dreadful. Nearby, Russian fishers had cut open a huge fish for salting; it was such a halibut as I had never seen. I recalled that when Captain Cook explored the Northern Pacific, his men hauled up a fish of 254 pounds. But here, in Vardo, they have brought in halibut up to 300 *kilos*, and have known such a fish, from its markings, to be ninety years old.

A little Russian steamer I had counted on, was now loaded and due to sail; at two in the morning we put out to sea. The voyage to Archangel—along the Mur-

man Coast of Northern Russia, and down the White Sea—took five days. The Murman, rising in low granite hills, proved bare and treeless, and save for fishing settlements in the more sheltered bays, uninhabited. At these we would call, taking aboard their dried fish, taking up or setting down rough seafaring men. One larger settlement there was—Alexandrovsk; whence the steamer sailed up a *fjord* to Pola, and returned to Alexandrovsk for a couple of hours. Hardly had we anchored, when a row-boat put off from the shore, and its occupants, two young men and a young woman, stepped up the gangway. They carried a pile of music, and without a word descended to the saloon, opened the piano, and played Grieg, passing then to Liszt and Tschaikowsky. The men were unshorn, and uncouthly dressed, but their faces were intelligent, they played with talent, and their eyes flashed to the music. The young woman, dark and slender, wore a rude grey corduroy; her face, as she sat listening, expressed an extraordinary understanding. They played until the steamer was about to sail, then, collecting their music, took to their boat and rowed away. There was a biological station at Alexandrovsk, and attached to it a highly educated staff; but in the whole settlement only one piano. They told me musicians came aboard the steamer each time she lay there.

Next morning, on deck, a man stood chained to a winch, heavily fettered. Catching my eye upon him, he seemed to go mad, cursing me with terrible Russian oaths, and relapsing into a stupor. A fisherman, one of the deck passengers, he had become drunk and disorderly, and was chained up without any ceremony. He half hung there now in the cold wind—fainting, the tousled hair shot with grey, the beard blown across the cut face, misery and stupefaction in all his bearing. If

Holy Russia were not careful, she would be losing this man's soul.

Steaming south, into the White Sea, it was calm and sunny. When we crossed to the east shore, an immense though stunted forest covered the country. Several steamers sailed outwards, laden to the decks with timber. The sea narrowed. Soon we passed between the wooded banks of the Dwina River. As we steamed up, masses of cut logs appeared on the banks, and in clearings of the forest, for mile after mile, stood saw mills. Before each was a wharf, and at many wharves steamers were loading; they say a thousand cargoes of timber go out from the Dwina each summer. Now log rafts came floating down, an acre or more in area. Then came heavy rowing boats, a dozen or more, laden with ship's stores; in each, an old woman steered, while four powerful young ones pulled at the oars. The blue and green domes of churches now appeared above the forest, and presently we sighted the low-lying town of Archangel. In pouring rain the steamer tied up at her wharf. Across the river from Archangel starts the narrow-gauge railroad to the South, and my train went out in the early afternoon. It still rained heavily. For hours nothing was to be seen but the interminable forest of birch and fir. A Khirghiz family, and a Jew, sharing my compartment, made themselves tea, and slept; again making tea, they turned in for the night, and I, wearied with the rain and the forest and the slow lumbering of the train, presently followed.

Next morning the sun shone. There were numerous clearings in the forest, and peasants in their red tunics—the women barefooted and using the scythe—were making hay. The forest disappeared; the country became settled. Towards afternoon I changed trains at



Wologda, and the same evening reached Yaroslavl, on the Volga, 525 miles south from Archangel.

The Volga, in summer, is a great waterway. From Yaroslavl, where I boarded a passenger boat, to the river's mouth, was seventeen hundred miles; but it is navigable for full two thousand. One may call this river's width, through the heart of Russia, five hundred yards, and thirty-nine towns and a thousand villages lie upon its banks. The right bank was always the higher, rising often to two hundred feet; where, if it were not the forest, might be perched a village, or a solitary church. The lower, left bank gave a far view over the plain; which changed from tilled land to pasture, and pasture to forest, as we swept steadily by. Numerous beacons stood on the banks, and lines of buoys marked the shallower water; the whole of these being lit up at night.

By the month of November, this great waterway would be frozen again for the winter, but now the stream of traffic was interminable. Here, steaming up-river, comes a fine passenger boat. Following her comes a big tank steamer, carrying petroleum from Baku, or some other well on the shore of the Caspian. Here is a cargo carrier from Astrachan; she is loaded with wool from Turkestan, with cotton from the oasis of Merv, with fish products from near the river's mouth, and with Siberian goods from Samara. Now we pass a big raft of logs—as on the Dwina; it is downward bound, and is pulled by a tug. Here is another oil boat; a cargo of grain; a cargo of building stone; a down-river passenger carrier; and if you take stock an hour hence, you will see a like procession go past again.

This is the second day out. We are come to the junction of the Oka River with the Volga, and below the

junction, on the high right bank, stands the city of Nizhni-Novgorod. It is the time of the great fair, and I shall stay here a day or so; entering a *droshky* I am taken up the hill at a hand-gallop.

A bridge of boats crossed from Nizhni to the fair. But there, disillusion! One had heard it said, "The Siberian Railway has killed the Fair," and had gone his unthinking way; I was now to realise the Siberian Railway *had* killed the fair: not the business, that remains quite immense. But at Nizhni to-day two merchants meet across a glass of tea, and a million roubles of picturesque goods never see the fair at all. Where were the caravans of brick tea, carried on yaks? Where were the splendid and costly Siberian furs? Where were the bales of lambskins from Bokhara—the finest Astrachans? Where were the Persian carpets from Tabriz, the Persian turquoises from Bujnurd—one and all attended by their owners in appropriate costume? Where, if it came to that, were the performing bears; the persons in top boots and velveteen, who sprang into the air, or folded their arms and danced on their haunches; the folk singers and their *balalaika* orchestras—where were any at all of the old concomitants? I saw none. I certainly saw black-coated merchants from Moscow, and their bales of factory goods; I was importuned to buy trifles stamped with "A present from Nizhni"; I could even have had my photo in miniature, or my name upon a hundred visiting cards. I did actually dine in one of their restaurants, to the music of a military band; but for me the most famous fair in the world had ceased to exist.

Two days later—a Sunday—aboard a passenger boat, oil-driven, I journeyed on. The air was balmy. The river flowed calm as a mirror. By sundown we were passing through a forest region, when, of a sudden,

splendid singing was heard, and I saw, standing together on the lower deck beside the oil engine, the mechanics, the crew, and a number of the deck passengers. Their hair and their beards were brushed, each man wore a clean red tunic, and as they stood reverently before an ikon, they sang a number of hymns. In a group of Russian peasants at their devotions, brushed and washed, I always envisage a composite Jesus Christ. Russia is full of such physical Jesuses. Amongst these peasants too, crude and superstitious as so many are, there are men who exude His Essence as no other men do; they are the last guardians of the Jesus tradition. Should a Christ be born in these our days, to regenerate a far-gone humanity, He will be a *moujik*.

After sunrise next morning, when the mist had lifted, I beheld in the distance a city. It lay a few *versts* from the river, on rising ground, and against the horizon rose the domes of many magnificent churches. This was the holy city of Kazan, one time capital of the Mahomedan Tatars, still inhabited by many; and I supposed these splendid domes had not risen there fortuitous, but as the weighed and calculated policy of the Orthodox Greek Church. At the landing stage for the city they were selling watermelons, and for an inconsiderable sum I bought myself an immense comb of honey. Next day we came to Samara, where the Volga reaches furthest East, and an hour or two below the town sailed under the great Samara railway bridge.

Twice, journeying Europewards from the East, I had crossed this bridge. I had crossed it coming from Siberia—from the mines. They have mined alluvial gravels in Siberia for one hundred and fifty years; but it is rather as a food belt, perhaps the vastest of all, that I think of this country. I conceive Siberia, for food

production, as a belt three hundred miles wide, several thousand miles long, bounded south by the Steppe, north by the Arctic waste, gathering in not less than half a million cultivators each year from Russia, and as yet in its infancy. When the snow melts in the spring, Siberia becomes suddenly a carpet of wild flowers. Ploughing and seeding are rushed ahead, and with incredible rapidity, in the mellowing, almost muggy weather, the grain sprouts, becomes green, is full grown, and maturing to harvest. It is a fine wheat. The belt is a great producer of cattle too. The meat is of prime quality. The very finest butter I have tasted came from Omsk, whilst the butter shippers of Denmark exploit Siberia for their own ends. Nor do I forget her great droves of horses. By October, Siberia's season is over. The harvest is gathered in. The hay is stacked. The stock are in winter quarters. The wood is cut and piled. The stoves are lit, and the double windows in the stoutly built log houses hermetically sealed. By November, the people go in furs, and high felt boots. The sledges begin running on the ice, or along the posting routes. The days close in; the thermometer settles down far below zero; and the great territory falls again into a long sleep.

Below Samara, the Volga widened; it was muddied too, and sand banks were now seen. This was a grain country, interspersed with bare uplands, whence dust storms came blowing; and the weather was become hot. The Russians, travelling in the saloon, came and went. They paid for the bare cabin, and mostly provided their own sheets, which seemed fine, and carefully marked. They carried their own tea equipage, lump sugar, lemon, and a tin box with cakes and sweetmeats. I observed a fastidiousness as to their person, their hands and nails,

their linen—indeed I thought them rather distinguished; they read absorbedly, seemed to talk cleverly, often played the piano well; but with the stranger were shy and reserved.

Here was Saratoff, a provincial capital; exhausting its interior, I walked out to the confines, and sat to muse awhile. The immensity of Russia was upon me. I was trying, in time and space, to place these many millions of beings. They were so spacious themselves! And so haphazard! Many of them drove you to madness. Yet in their own good time things got done, and well done at that, and you stood confounded.

Give him time! In his own way, which is not your way, the Slav will come for certain. In one hundred years he will be the great fact in Europe—shy and reserved with the outer world, no doubt; constitutionally and climatically sad; but the great fact in Europe nevertheless. Observe this shockheaded one who comes out of Saratoff, how half-shyly, half-furtively he regards you. His peasant mind strives gigantically to express something—he knows not what. Throughout Russia millions of just such shockheaded ones go shyly, furtively, mutely as yet, trying to express—what? Give them time; some day the words will come! These several figures, lying huddled on the plain, are peasants who sleep off a drunken stupor. Always at city outskirts I had seen them thus, sleeping it off in the heat and the rain, and in Siberia, often in the snow. Here is one—capless, coatless, lying on his arm, his thick hair covering his eyes, breathing heavily. Do not scorn him; he may be some mute, inglorious Christ.

Then there came the frontier-like town of Tzaritzin, with a country less fertile, given to sandy wastes, an ever-widening river, and a spell of real heat; yet before a month or two, ice would cover this river, and snow



this hot, sandy waste. Here one saw the yak as a beast of burden; from Tzaritzin to Peking, many thousands of miles apart, this uncouth dromedary is harnessed to the service of man.

Next morning we were sailing between low-lying delta lands, which merged into immense meadows of cut and stacked hay; and by midday, lying on each side the river, here a mile wide, we had arrived at the city of Astrachan.

Here was the great depot between Europe and Asia, between Caspian Sea and Volga River; the long and busy river front, the many steamers and barges at the wharves, spoke its commercial importance. Astrachan's peculiar product is not the silky black lambskin named after it; it is the sturgeon, a fish which here reaches perfection where the salt of the sea meets the fresh of the river. It is caught in immense numbers; dried and salted, and sent up-river in bulk. The roe of the sturgeon, or caviare—especially the black roe, the *ikra*, eaten by Russians with hot bread and chopped green onion—is sent from Astrachan over the world.

Some hours below Astrachan, the Volga ends in the Caspian Sea. Sailing down this inland sea, so salt, so shallow, so easily lashed into fury, yet carrying a great shipping, you reach upon its western shore the city of Baku, lying as it were in a desert, yet because of its oil wells supporting a quarter of a million people. Indeed Baku, and the Caspian itself, is the centre of a remarkable zone. Oil has been struck, and has gushed, from spots all round the Caspian; whilst I have seen oil wells flowing from islands in the sea itself. Baku has now seen its best days—those few square miles—but the whole zone of the Caspian remains; and a great expansion of all this region, because of its oil, must come

about. Caspian oil gave a dead Swede his millions, and science, literature and art their Nobel prizes.

Leaving Baku, and the desert shores of the Caspian, I was carried by train across the fertile country of the Kuban Cossacks, the second day reaching Russia proper, and the city of Rostoff-on-Don. Soon I was walking the Rostoff streets, among the Sunday crowds. Especially are they congregated in some garden, round a military band. In this Russian crowd, as in all her crowds (I have seen it a hundred times), stand many women heavy with child. They stand so utterly placidly. "This is the natural thing! And the entirely seemly!" their whole bearing seems to say. The eyes of other women are ranging stealthily. "I wonder if *you* are the man?" they keep saying. At the first blush, these are the glances of wantons; but meet their eyes full, and at the back of them lies a something which will give you pause. "Remember, I want to have children!" it says. "That's what I'm here for; I want to have lots of children!"

The Slav women stand for a boundless, an appalling vitality. In the mass, they are a tidal wave of life; and in Nature's eyes, where only life counts, are the strongest, greatest thing in Russia. Beside them, the Slav men, vital and enduring themselves, fade into nothingness.

I left Rostoff at night. Morning found the train steaming through the biggest wheat field in the world; there was nothing but wheat to the horizon, yellow for the harvest, and hundreds of machines, each driven by four horses, were cutting and binding. All day it lasted, and at night, under the summer moon, the train still passed through wheat for mile after mile. Millions of acres of wheat! Millions of placid women conceiv-

ing, and bringing forth! Nature's reservoirs are bottomless hereabouts—and the future is the Slavs'.

Next day there came a break in the wheat. A wide river flowed, and on the high bank of it, among old trees, stood gilded dome after gilded dome. We were come to the holy city of Kief. Standing upon this high ridge, I viewed the winding, branching river, far below, the many miles of hay-meadows and pasturage, the forests on the horizon. Turning about, I faced the magnificent churches, the great religious establishments, the richly endowed monasteries. From many of these a deep chanting issued, and I entered now here, now there, to listen. Such part singing I had never heard; such serried ranks of sleek, bearded priests and choristers never seen. No organ played; but as each canticle ended, there lingered a long-drawn-out hum, rich and deep, which went reverberating round and round the dome. This was Holy Russia indeed!

[To-day chaos has come upon Russia, and the unthinking world believes her ruined. She is not. In her story this revolution is but an incident. Soon life and work will become normal. Those vast harvests be gathered in as of old. Those shaggy men will see with clearer eyes; those placid women bear their children in a happier land.]

## CHAPTER XIII

### JERUSALEM AND THE JEWS

Now, in our world-journey, we come to the East—to those lands of glamour where I so often wandered. I would that I could cast their glamour over you, that you might see them with my sight, and long for them with a furious longing. I think of the East at dawn, of innumerable holy men upon the flat roofs, whose cries go out over the desert. I think of her at noon; the tiles of Samarkand flash in the sun. The pilgrims reach Kerbela, the *dhoongas* glide along Jhelum River, the lotuses float beside the palace at Mandalay. But the night, with its scents and sounds! . . . I think I am to die in the East at night.

. . . . .

The sun was setting behind Port Said. Mellow rays of light lay upon steamers anchored there, upon the Egyptian swarms who coaled them, upon the stately domed edifice of the Canal Administration, upon de Lesseps himself—a de Lesseps of stone—standing out on the breakwater. It was Sunday evening, and the weekly steamer of the Khedivial Line passed out heading for Palestine, and the Syrian Coast. The season was early March, and the tourist stream towards the Holy Land was setting in; among the forty passengers were a number of elderly women, and there were five clergymen. On the steamer's after deck were piled crates of vegetables; the market gardeners about Alexandria were sending tomatoes and the many-leafed artichoke to the Syrian markets.

At seven in the morning I landed at Jaffa, and at eight the train went out over the narrow-gauge line. We passed for some miles through orange gardens, the trees laden with ripe fruit, and came on to the considerable plain of Sharon. Arabs ploughed here with their oxen; on the expanses of grass shepherds tended their sheep and goats; and distant trains of camels crossed it. Beyond this lay a rolling country, less fertile, and the tent encampments of Bedouins were seen. The low hills of Judea, bare and stony, now lay ahead. Entering among these, the train passed into a rocky gorge, and winding for an hour and a half upwards, along watercourses, came out upon a plateau on the hill tops.

Here was Jerusalem. Up among these rocks, was the holy city of Jew and Christian. That the first builders should have perched it on stony ground, among hills so utterly barren, occasioned in me a deep surprise. The station lay a mile out. A deep rift lay between it and the high fortress-like walls of the city. Beyond these stood Mount Zion, and at their extremity the moated citadel of King David, where, through the Jaffa Gate, one passes into the heart of the town.

Here are thronged, narrow streets, a medley of costume and of people; yet one thing you see in a flash. Jerusalem is Jewish. Overwhelmingly it is a city of Jews. You have walked a hundred paces beyond the Jaffa Gate, and have seen a thousand men go by. There was a Franciscan monk, a German peasant from the colony, a group of Russian pilgrims, a band of Arabs—but of Gentiles that was all. The rest were Jews. This throng which passes is a Jewish throng. They talk Arabic and Spanish, German, Russian, and Polish, but they are Jews.

And how Jewish! The white, serious faces, the piercing dark eyes—the hooked impersonal noses. There are



ever so many with ringlets, with kaftan and gaberdine, in quilted gown, girdle, and wearing the velvety round hat; the Spanish Jew, turbaned, bearded and hawk-like; the Austrian, with a suggestion of blond; the Oriental Jew of Tripoli and Tunis, of Bagdad and Bokhara; in the greasy bowlers, and the long overcoats which were always second-hand, the Poles and the Russians shuffle past, and there is noise, buying and selling, a drone of old men reading their Bibles, a whining of beggars, a continuous passing up and down, a great laziness, and a permeating smell.

These Jews are dirty, and they are poor. Vicious they are not; but if one might hazard a guess, they are degenerate. In this throng you will not find ten men of muscle, not ten to go out on the land and produce. They crowd in this city, and living much upon outside doles, are become parasitic. For them, it is enough to be Jews. Observing the Letter of the Law, steeped in custom and observance, they judge themselves the Chosen People still. But for those who see things as they are, these are the theology-ridden dregs of a great race.

The streets narrow into the bazaars, built under vaulted arches of stone, and in their essence utilitarian. Foodstuffs, charcoal, clothing, tin and copper ware, shabby jewellery and the like, are exposed, but you will look in vain for any beautiful thing. At this season, in the bazaars, the eye is attracted to the piles of Jaffa oranges; and especially to the cauliflowers, carried in panniers on the backs of Arab hawkers, which seem to be the finest in existence. These are mostly grown at a neighbouring village, and alone among vegetables are entitled to the "Jerusalem" prefix.\*

\* The "Jerusalem" artichoke is a corruption of the Italian girasole—sunflower. "Artichoke" is corrupted from the Arab Alkarshuf; the true artichoke being a native of Barbary.

—(Oxford English Dictionary.)

Leaving the bazaars, I passed through the labyrinthine windings of masonry which make up the city, and presently came to the Wailing Place of the Jews. A high retaining wall, built of the immense stones that were in Solomon's Temple, marks the spot. It was not the Sabbath, nor a day set apart for wailing, yet some thirty men and women were there. With foreheads against the wall, some stood inanimate, others recited passages of scripture, and a number were uttering loud moans.

As I looked on this scene, there was a stir among a group who sat in the sun; nine magnificent old men presented themselves before me. They seemed to be six feet high; they were bearded, and had massive, intellectual heads. These were Moghrabin—Jews of Morocco and Tripoli—professional beggars, mostly blind, and quite useless. After receiving each man his penny, and giving no word of thanks, they returned into the sun to sleep.

A litany, says my guide-book, is sometimes chanted by Jews at the Wailing Place. It is as follows:

READER: Because of the Palace which is deserted—

PEOPLE: We sit alone and weep.

READER: Because of the Temple which is destroyed,  
Because of the Walls which are broken down,  
Because of our greatness which is departed,  
Because of the precious stones of the Temple ground to powder,  
Because of our priests who have gone astray,  
Because of our kings who have continued bad—

PEOPLE: We sit alone and weep.

As I strolled from the Wailing Place, I, too, framed a chant for these people. But my song of the Jews was a pæan, a song of triumph, a death-blow to the Wailing Place for evermore:

Wail not, O ye people!

Is it a Spiritual Kingdom ye mourn? Verily, no.

The Spiritual Kingdom is within, and never fadeth.

Is it a temporal? Then hear me:

I have been to the ends of the earth, and bring you tidings.

For a mile on Broadway I passed dry-goods stores, noting the names upon them, and I saw many to be *wholesale*,

I gazed in the windows of the furniture emporiums in Chicago,

I have poured diamonds from a bucket at Kimberley, and of Hatton Garden also have I had inside vision,

I have stood "between the chains" at Johannesburg, and read the names upon scrip certificates,

I have taken note of real estate transfers, issued by the registrars' department of Sydney, N.S.W.,

I have passed along Throgmorton Street, and I have seen those who came and went at the *Parquet*,

I have witnessed the auction pools in the smoking-rooms of great steamships,

I have eaten at Krasnopolsky, in Amsterdam, and supped at the Frankfurter Hof; and at the Hotel Metropole, Brighton, I did mistake the visitors' book for the wine list.

These things have I seen and done, O ye people!

Therefore I say unto you, Wail not! The Day is come!

Ye have entered into such a kingdom as your forefathers never imagined.

Ye are become powerful and rich, nay, exceeding rich,

Ye have nobbled the press, have dispossessed kings, and are become the arbiters of war itself,

Your People, chosen of old, now own half the earth. Why wail?

Spring is a pleasant time in Judea. All day long, more like than not, the sun shines out of a pale blue sky, and the distant hills beyond the Jordan and the Dead Sea are blue. As one walks from Jerusalem, countrywards, the eye accustoms itself to the stony hill tops, to the ever-present flat gravestones. There is little colour, but as pledge of the spring, here is an almond-tree blossoming, and over there a meadow is bright with the scarlet anemone. If you should walk so far as Bethlehem, you will see vines on terraces below the town, but these are not yet green.

Blue sky! Stony hills! Gravestones! An almond tree! A flowery meadow! Low-lying vines! In German these become Himmelblau, Steinburg, Grabenstein, Mandelbaum, Blumenfeld, Weinthal; and as we read a

light begins to dawn. When the Jews in Central Europe were dispossessed of their oriental names, and bidden seek others in the inanimate world, it was surely a Jew of Jerusalem, one who had walked thus countrywards in the spring, who turned them to these Judean hills for a nomenclature.

But Cohen is not of the hills.

Few Jews are seen in the Moslem quarter. Their filthy alleys abut on the Mosque of Omar, they dwell within stones' throw of its vast courtyard—where are cypress trees and green grass, bubbling water, fresh air, and such a vista as Rome might envy—yet I doubt if a Jew sets foot there.

For this was the site of the Temple! Here stood the sacred rock! Here David, Solomon and Zerubbabel, the greatest men in Israel, spoke with Jehovah face to face! Shall the Jew, down-trodden and oppressed, a creature of the Turk, go there to witness Mahomedan triumph? Fresh air may be well enough, and there are always the sunny slopes outside the Jaffa Gate; but fresh air, or no fresh air, so help him God, he can wait; he will see the thing through!

The Jews cannot forget they once ruled here, where they are now a subject race; that their religion held men in sway before Mahomet was born or thought of. Yet with it all, despite cycles of persecution, and a thousand years of contempt, they retain a pathetic affinity for Islam. Mahomedans, too, have a certain sentiment for Jews. The Arabs, especially, had a deep strain of Semitic blood, while Mahomet's temperament, mind and creed were Jewish through and through. Another bond of union lay in their simultaneous banishment from Spain. Many Jewish communities, when turned out of Spain, settled in Islam, and to this day Spanish is spoken in ghettos throughout the near East.

So the Jew is found living not only in Palestine, but wherever there are Mahomedans; and not as a cultivator of the soil, but a town-dweller. Mahomedan cities bordering the Mediterranean hold a thick fringe of Jews. I will vouch for there being one hundred and fifty thousand in the towns of Morocco and I have seen many thousands in Algiers, Tunis, Alexandria, Jaffa, Beyrout, Tripoli, Rhodes, Smyrna, and Constantinople. There are several thousand Jews in Aden—"the land of Uz"—of a pronounced caste, and dating back to biblical times. There are eighty thousand Jews in Jerusalem, and a large colony in Damascus. In Bagdad there are seventy thousand, forming one-half the city's population. There are Jews in each township of Mesopotamia. At Cochin, on the Malabar Coast of India, I saw a Jewish colony which dates back many centuries; the Arabs had a connection with this coast, and it is reasonably certain the Jews followed them there. I saw Jews in Teheran. In Bokhara there have been Jews from time immemorial. They have passed through many vicissitudes, and the present community, six thousand strong, has won its way to something approaching respect. They are admittedly the honestest sect in Bokhara, and right living people. But this is not exceptional. The Oriental Jew, by and large, *is* an honest man, and a right-living; it is his appalling filth which the world cannot stomach. It is a disconcerting fact that the Oriental Jew, who shuns fresh air, remains dirty from choice, and lives in a foul-smelling warren, is as long lived as the cleanest Gentile, and nearly always his intellectual superior.

If you stand upon the battlements of Jerusalem, or on the Mosque of Omar's splendid platform, the Christian city will be revealed. It is a city of white masonry, very massive, of cupolas within the city, and church



spires without. Knowing it better, you will add to these the high compound walls, the hostels, the mysterious little doors, where, on the ringing of a bell, appears a French nun or a Greek priest; the endless ruins and caves and rock tombs; the dim churches, above and below ground, where voices reverberate, and the air is heavy with incense; and the innumerable shrines, in which men and women suddenly prostrate themselves, showering kisses. I remember a door in a wall they opened for me, and I passed into a courtyard. At one corner, steps led down to the supposititious Pool of Siloam; but the glory of the courtyard was a bed of white violets, which a French brotherhood tended with care.

Below the battlements, a little valley falls away. Through it once ran the brook Kedron. On its slopes the flat gravestones of unnumbered Moslems now rest. Just across the valley there is a walled garden, one-third of an acre in area. It is thought to be the Garden of Gethsemane. Lovingly tended by the Franciscans, there are cypresses in the garden, and hoary olive trees of fabulous age. At this season the stocks smell sweetly. A short distance from here, on the hillside, is the cave that they call the tomb of Mary. It is hewn in the rock, and so large as to be used for a chapel. From the vaulted entrance, fifty steps lead down into the darkness, where, when I descended, the Armenians were holding a mass. The air was heavy with incense, and with the exhalations of the worshippers, indeed it was almost foetid; but my candle threw light upon a well of pure water, cut in the rock floor.

Leaving the open spaces around the mosque, I retrace my steps through the winding alleys, and come to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. Easter time is near, when the Russian pilgrims gather in Jerusalem; yesterday a band of peasants, coming on foot, had passed me out-

side the Damascus Gate, and I now found a number collected about the church. They were poor people, roughly clad, and mostly women. Tears streamed from their faces, and several lay prostrate, kissing the venerated ground. In the shrine itself, in the semi-darkness, three strong women lunged heavily against me; they were blinded and shaken with emotion.

That day I drove to Bethlehem. In the Church of the Nativity, when I entered, the Greeks were conducting a service, and a number of priests stood by the altar, or sat in their stalls. As I listened to the chanting, a party of tourists appeared—some eight American women, stout and masterful, travelling without their men. Coming out of the nave, and finding no impediment to their progress, they seemed, as it were, to line up, hip to fat hip, and advanced in a threatening phalanx. They stopped, but at the altar's very threshold, where they stood, guide-books in hand, keenly appreciative. Involuntarily, as they bore down on him, the officiating priest appeared to falter, and it almost seemed that masterful voices were bidding him "get on with his stunt."

In a cave below this church—the manger of the Nativity—a silver star is let into the rock; when I entered the cave, the Russian women were here again, lying down to kiss each silver ray.

Wherever I went were shrines and churches. On Mount Zion, besides the palace of Caiaphas the High Priest, near the newly finished Cathedral of the German Catholics, the Armenian Patriarch and his monks inhabit a strange congeries of dwellings. Outside the walls is the monastery of the Copts, from Egypt, and the church of their neighbours, the Abyssinians. These men are negroid, mostly coal black; their ritual leans towards bells, candles, and incense, and a priest clad in garish silks; yet in their own way they seemed sincere.

In the Russian Church, within the great Russian compound, as I passed, a service was being held; the peasant pilgrims crowded it to the doors. At the village of Karem, an hour's drive, stands the monastery of St. John. In the adjacent Church, that I thought to find empty, the brotherhood chanted their afternoon prayer. Near here dwell a colony of Russian nuns; they too prayed earnestly through that sunny afternoon.

Outside the Damascus Gate, in a meadow, there was an encampment of gipsies. Something lower, more vagrant than the Bedouin, they come out of Arabia, wandering ever. In all this Holy Land these seemed the only people not at prayer, the one tribe not fearful of its soul.

What is the riddle of it all? How are we to take human nature in this strange place? I ask you, kneeling there, to tell me this: Where, in these things, do the emotions end? Where does the intellect begin? It will soon be Easter, and when Easter comes, the Vali will send a company of Mahomedan soldiers to guard the Holy Sepulchre. If he did not do so, Greeks and Catholics, Syrians, Copts and Armenians—Christians all—would fight for the best stances, and they would fight to the death. For days I have seen all these sects at prayer. I have heard chanting in dim aisles, have breathed air heavy with incense, have witnessed untold emotion. These things, and much more, I have seen, and I have given credit where it seemed due; yet my brain declares this sending of soldiers to be the cardinal fact in all the Holy Land.

Those olive trees in the Garden of Gethsemane seemed a thousand years old. It may even be they were growing in the days of Jesus Christ. At first they were young and lovely, covered with leaves, yielding bounteously

their fruit. Now they have become gnarled and shapeless masses of wood, wellnigh leafless, bearing no fruit, cumbering uselessly the earth. To me, they are like Christianity. It, too, grew to life here; a young and lovely tree, of pure and simple conception, its leaves were to be self-denial, simplicity of life, its fruit love. What has it become?

There was One God. But there came a night when the trunk gnarled, the leaves shrivelled—and the Athanasian Creed was born.

Christians were to tread the path of unity: the cry was "Peace on Earth, Goodwill towards men." They split. Creeds and factions, each crying out the "true way," filled the earth. The sectarian hatreds of Christians have become a great fact.

There was to be humility, self-effacement; there was to be scorning of money, of worldliness. But to-day men and women laugh humility to scorn. In our England, pride of family, precedence, titles and decorations, notoriety, and—above all—wealth, are the things sought after. The National Church does not lag behind. Its head, the Archbishop of Canterbury, draws fifteen thousand a year, and takes precedence after royalty. His stultifying of Christ is thought the most natural thing in the world; yet he is Christ's understudy in England as it were, the exemplar of the Jesus tradition.

His Grace stands there pained and shocked: a spade having been called a spade. Plaintively he points to his palaces, to his retinues: "That's where my money goes," he cries; "I spend little on myself."

"But, Good your Grace, if your palaces offend, surrender your palaces! Surrender your troops of servants! Surrender, if you would be like Him, your sumptuous settings, your dignities, your robes! Christ had none of these. He was not clad in fine linen. He did not fare

richly. He took the lowest places at feasts. You mean very well, I know. But like the multitude who call themselves Christians, *you have gone blind!*"

The serious and thinking to-day are streaming away from such churches. There are those of us who must and will have sincerity in life. We seek it out on the hills, or with Nature in the wilderness. Never again shall we seek it in creeds which are dead as the olive trees, and do not know it.

Leaving Jerusalem by the Damascus Gate, a carriage road runs north over the bleak, stony hills, towards Samaria and Galilee. In a drive of eight hours I reached the town of Nablous—the ancient Shechem, and at a remote period the capital of Palestine. Lying beneath Mount Gerizim, where are Jacob's Well, the tomb of Joseph, and other venerated spots, the town was a landmark in all Israel. Shechem became the holy city of the Samaritans, a sect or tribe whose origin is lost in the dim past, but who, in reduced numbers, have existed down to the present. Retaining their religious customs and prejudices, they number now some two hundred souls, dwelling together here, and ruled hereditarily by their chief priest.

A priest of these people, a son, I take it, of the chief priest, met me in the streets of Nablous, and bade me to the Samaritan quarter. Passing into a labyrinth of masonry, and of covered ways, we emerged upon the roofs, among stone cupolas. Here we were joined by three others, with keys, and upon the unlocking of doors, I was ushered into the Samaritan Synagogue. This was a mere attic, and save for a green curtain at one end, quite bare. A carpet was now spread for me, and from behind the curtain they produced an engraved metal cylinder, which, drawing a bow at a venture, I guessed



to be Urim and Thummim. But this being opened out lengthwise, as it were upon a hinge, disclosed the codex of the Samaritan Pentateuch, in Hebrew, a most ancient manuscript, which antiquarians view with emotion. In these five earlier books of the Samaritans, so like their own, the Jews themselves find little that is unorthodox; but the Samaritans took undoubted liberties with Joshua.

The four Samaritan priests being now ranged about me, I took stock of what must be the purest, the most inbred facial type in the world. The type was ultra-Jewish. These men, physically, were Super-Jews: I would say Jews with a high Persian forehead; Jews with a cross of Zoroaster—if ever he did cross.

My friends, coming to business, now let it be known, that they were a poor people, and their church sorely in need of funds. They were gratified by the receipt of two francs. After further converse, I bid them good-bye, going out over the roofs again, as I had come. In the gardens of Nablous a fine stream of water ran, a foretaste of that city of streams whither I was journeying—Damascus.

## CHAPTER XIV

### THE MAHOMEDAN EAST

MAHOMET, Founder of the Faith, the greatest man to come out of Arabia, was born six hundred years late. By that time, Christianity had spread to Europe, into a cool climate, and among people who, because of that very climate, were destined to rule the world. It followed that the creed of these peoples was assured the utmost prestige and support down through the centuries.

Mahomedanism, on the other hand, was adopted by the men of the heat belt, who, because of that environment, were to remain backward and ignorant, and drag their creed down to their own level. The climate they lived in, as much as the religion they professed, elevated the Christians; just as the climate they lived in, as much as the teachings of the Koran, held back the followers of Mahomet.

But no one can rob Mahomet of this: he taught that there was *One God*. His religion has run to seed in the heat, but it has never lost that fine conception. But Christianity, very early, fell into the clutches of mystics, and emerged from them plus the Holy Trinity—a sort of metaphysical syndicate—an idea borrowed from the Hindus. I can respect the conception of One God; but my intelligence is outraged by the Trinity. Mahomet gave his followers one god and three wives; the Christians found themselves pledged to one wife and three gods.

Mahomet was hardly dead when jealousy and intrigue

broke out among his followers. This might have been foretold, for in their long history the Arabs have never cohered. A race with unusual intelligence, they lacked unity, so that they have never taken, and will never take, the place in the world which should be theirs.

In two other races of fine intelligence we have seen this same quality—in the Poles and in the Irish. They cannot unite. Or, once united, they cannot cohere. There is a maggot in their brain. They lack the political instinct. With all their talents, neither race has achieved, nor ever will achieve, national stability.\*

The power which passed from Mahomet, rested with a certain Meccan clan, from which were chosen his successors, or khalifs; until Ali, the fourth khalif, the Prophet's cousin, and son-in-law, who flouted the clan, and prepared to establish a succession of the blood. His party became known as the Shiahs, or sectarians.

But Ali lost the day. The Khalifate was wrested from him by the orthodox Arabs, or Sunnis, and its seat transferred from Medina to Damascus; whilst he, with his disgruntled minority, set up as a rival at Kufa. He was assassinated near there by the Sunnis. His oldest son, Hassan, Mahomet's grandson, presently retired to Medina, where some say he was poisoned; and his younger, more militant son, Hosein, assumed the leadership. A few years later, the Khalif of Damascus sent an army against the Shiahs, and Hosein, together with his trusty lieutenant and half-brother, Abbas, and many of his followers, perished on the desert field of Ker-bela.

His leadership, his descent, and the mournful story of

\*As to the Irish: the English, with all their character, lack subtlety. Had they, thirty years ago, given Ireland Home Rule with alacrity, the factions which would have formed there would now be only hating each other, and feeling for England as one feels for a dear old friend.

his martyrdom, cast the utmost glamour upon Hosein's memory, which to the Shiahs became holy. Nine of his direct descendants held the Shiah Khalifate. They are known as the Imāms, and revered by the sect as prophets. Their tombs are scattered over the deserts of Northern Arabia, Mesopotamia and Persia, and form the most beautiful and romantic group of shrines in the world. The last Imām is said to have supernaturally disappeared, and his second coming is eagerly awaited by the Shiahs, who, though still a minority, now number many millions.

The Mahomedan faith, which was religion and government combined, spread like fire. Yet the Arabs, who dominated it, did not cease their intriguing, and Sunnis and Shiahs split in their turn; from each, as time went by, there branched off sects and refinements of sects without end. But in the main, the first great cleavage persisted, and Moslems everywhere were Sunni or Shiah, regarding each other, one may suppose, as Catholics and Protestants did. Even in distant Spain, the Sunnis of Cordova fought the Shiahs of Seville for hundreds of years.

In course of time Islam had spread from Morocco to Java, and from the Asiatic Steppe to Timbuctoo. Its fierceness and fervour were given it by the Arabs. But its art and beauty, which came later, were never theirs to give. These came first of all, and in fullest measure, from the Persians. The coloured tiles, the glory of Mahomedan building, were Persian, as were the golden minarets on the desert tombs of the Imāms. The decorators of Moorish Spain were Byzantines and Copts—actually Christians—brought in because of their art by the Arabs. Finally there came the Moguls—again not Arabs. One can hardly enumerate the beauties this illustrious dynasty of Emperor-Architects created. The Arabs conquered for Islam; the Persians, and the Mo-

guls, cast a glamour over her. By the time Mahomet had been dead a thousand years, his sway spread over a vast Empire, and romantic, beautiful mosques and shrines and palaces, many of them set far out in the desert, were scattered through it from end to end.

But Islam is not all a desert. The wide country of Asia Minor is much of it, a land of grain, of rivers, of forests, of cedar and beech and oak, of all that is green. Up in the northeastern corner I recall mountain slopes, with many a mountain village perched among trees, with rushing brooks, with a hundred emerald patches of tobacco and maize. Such charming hill paths wind up each expanse; and where they wind through old groves of chestnuts and oaks, where the grass is greenest, and some crystal brook rushes down, there are always a few graves clustered, with their flat, white stones. There is a grave I remember, too, by the orchards outside Damascus. Here Buckle lies buried; and I placed a bunch of blossoming apricot upon it.

Not all a desert! The Valley of Kashmir lies in Islam—one of the oldest, most placid valleys of mankind, where your houseboat drifts quietly along the waterways from lake to lake, or lies tied up beneath some grove of *chenar* trees. If you come to this valley in the springtime, as I came, you will see the *chenars* burst into leaf as it were in a night, and one day you will catch the pink almond blossom against the distant snows of the Karakoram. At this time, too, a vast assemblage repairs to the Dal Lake, renowned in Islam for its beauty, to the Mosque of Hazrat Bal upon its shores, where is treasured a hair of Mahomet's beard. There is a glade of giant *chenars* nearby, and orchards in blossom; and across the lake lie Shalimar and Nishat Bagh, with their rose terraces and splashing fountains—



kiosks of the Moguls, pleasure gardens of a long ago.

Not all a desert! From Chaman, once, crossing the Afghan frontier, I strolled across the plain. There is a fort out there, whence the Amir's soldiers are wont to snipe at strangers in Islam. This balmy autumn morning no one molested; but presently there wound down the Western hills, me-ward across the plain, trains of donkeys. They carried fresh grapes for markets along the frontier, and dried apricots, which would travel to bazaars more distant. These I discovered, came from the valley around Kandahar, eighty miles away, which the natives spoke of as the Garden of Asia.

When the donkey trains had passed, I lay in the sunshine and conjured up this valley. Afghanistan a fruit garden! Even if it were but the vale of Kandahar! Right across Asia, in this belt north of the tropics, often in highland country, one came upon these surprises, came, where you expected a waste, upon the desert blossoming like the rose. I recalled the fig orchards in the country behind Smyrna, the almond groves out from Damascus, the grapes at the oasis of Karaj, in Persia, the pomegranates of late autumn at Teheran, the apricots fruiting beside the irrigation ditches at Merv and outside the walls of Bokhara, and the peerless melons of Samarkand. At Chaman, yonder, upon the bare plain, were brick-red chrysanthemums in flower: only these, yet because of their watering, more massy in blossom than any I had ever seen. At Peshawar, further up the frontier, and but a stone's throw from the Khyber Pass, I remembered unique flaming hedges of the dog-rose. On the hillsides, as I drove into Kashmir, all along the Jhelum Gorge, wonderful wild flowers grew. About the Himalayan forests—all about Simla—grew a blood-red rhododendron, and in places one that was snow-white; these on no bushes, but on trees, high and wind-swept,

and they were wild as the wind itself. Far eastward, on the slopes of Korea and Japan, wild azaleas, in many shades, covered hill upon hill with their bloom. Westward, in Palestine, that month of March, the meadows of Samaria and Galilee had been a carpet. I saw the scarlet anemone oftenest, very velvety to the eye; the lubin and the orchid grew in profusion too, and under many a rock a bed of cyclamen. . . .

Seating ourselves upon the Magic Carpet—a Persian one, need I say—let us choose to be instantaneously set down on the Persian plain, at Ré, over against Teheran. Here is an oasis, with springs gushing from the limestone, with a mile of old trees and vegetation, and the ruins of a city of antiquity. Here, too, is the Mosque of Shah Abdul Azim—a much visited shrine; on a Friday, I have seen thousands of men cross the waste thither from Teheran, to worship.

Gazing across at Persia's capital, the eye beholds a city of the plain, with crenelated earthen ramparts, with many trees therein, with several domes flashing a turquoise blue; and beyond the city a royal castle or two perched upon hillocks, the rising desert, the distant northern hills, and the snow-capped peak of Demavend, the giant of this region.

Enter Teheran through one of her twelve gates, and find your way to her bazaars—arched vaults of brick, dimly lit from above. In this twilight labyrinth, of an afternoon, a dense crowd gathers to trade, to eat, to gossip [wedged occasionally apart by some camel train or procession of heavily laden porters passing through], to surge round some frenzied wandering dervish with Shiah fanaticism, to follow him, if it be near sunset, to some open space for the evening prayers. By five o'clock the bazaars are empty, the people gone to the

mosques; by nightfall the streets and the open spaces are clear, the gates of the city closed, and the day is over.

You will think Teheran, outside the vivid life of the bazaars, a poor and a drab place. You will think the Persians, in and out of their capital, a squalid and apathetic people. Yet they were a great race for centuries, the supreme artists in Islam, whose beauties have cast a glamour over the desert. But there is nothing here. Teheran is modern; and the modern Persians, under their futile and rapacious rulers, have atrophied, run utterly to seed. The city lies at near 4000 feet, in the latitude, let us say, of Gibraltar, and in winter is cold and bleak. The waste encircles it for many leagues, over which travellers must ride or pass by post-chaise. Being fearful of the rude post-houses, as I went out to the Caspian, I drove through the nights, and in the moonlight saw the long trains of pack camels, heavily laden, padding their unwearied way.

Northeast of Persia, beyond the Caspian Sea, lies a vast Mahomedan territory. This is Transcaspia, or the Turcoman Steppe—a waste, where the nomadic tribes travel with their camels and goats; and beyond that again is Turkestan, a land of more fertility, centring, in religion, round the holy Sunni city of Bokhara. A Russian military railway crossed this waste, and there crossed I, with my special permit.

The dead flat plain lay for hundreds of miles. It was treeless, but a stunted scrub grew, which camels were browsing, and one saw in the distance mounted Turcomans. Save for these, and a Russian settlement or two, it was a long, featureless day, yet memorable to me for the exhilaration of the sunshine, the balm in the autumn air. At midnight the train reached the oasis of Merv.

Three thousand horses were tethered around the spacious market-place of Merv next day. The Turcomans, their owners, tall and bearded, of a Mongol cast, in sheepskin hat and quilted tunic, traded and gossiped and drank tea; they ate melons seated around a carpet, and obviously had money to spend. The crops of the oasis—cotton, fruits, grain—were now gathered in, the vegetation shrivelled and dried; but fine irrigation ditches were running full, and one saw this wealth renewed with each coming of spring.

From all over Islam, a journey sometimes of thousands of miles, students and religious devotees are ever setting out for Bokhara, the holy and ancient, whose *medresses* and theologians are so renowned in Sunnidom. As you approach her, the level Turkestan wastes take on fertility, water is seen flowing in the furrows; whilst, if it be the spring, cotton is coming up, apricots are flowering in the orchards, and the silk mulberry is growing everywhere. It is from this region, too, that the skins of lambs, killed while immature, furnish the true "Astrachan."

Again you enter a walled city of the plain, but not into a city of disillusion. It is true Bokhara is a city of dried mud walls and bricks, her foundations set upon the detritus and refuse of two thousand years, and not architecturally fine; but the human interest of this foetid, throbbing spot cannot be surpassed.

Each man goes in a flowing gown of rainbow hues. If he is well-to-do, this will be of Bokhara silk; if poor, of some cheap Russian make; but all are brilliant, and in the crowded streets and bazaars is a surfeit of colour. Such vivid types of men! Firstly the Sarts—the Bokhariots proper—city dwellers, black bearded, white turbaned, with pale, fanatic faces, steeped in lasciviousness.

Many of these go on horseback, aristocrats of this city; whilst groups of a dozen or twenty, spreading a carpet, will sit on some mosque's platform, gossiping, drinking tea, eating the fine melons of the region, awaiting the *muezzin's* summons to prayer. Their women, of course, are never seen.

The Sart is not Mongolian, but you will see many Turcomans and Kirghiz in the city who are. These are desert men, dwellers on the *steppe*; of splendid physique, with faces as open and simple as the Sart faces are subtle. Wearing the high sheepskin hats, they, too, are brilliantly clad. There are Persians about. One wonders if these Shiahhs are acceptable in this holy Sunni city. There are Afghans, too, from their own land just to the south, zealous Sunnis, many of them drivers of camel caravans from Herat and Kabul.

And there are thousands of Jews. They have lived here from days immemorial, and though slain and tortured, and put upon many times, seem to have won through, and to be respected. The Jew is indeed Bokhara's honest man. In the bazaars they sit squatted before the finest silks and tapestries, and I found them, although we had no tongue in common, polite and accommodating traders.

In Bokhara there are Hindus of India, with their caste marks upon them. They number perhaps four hundred; they are moneylenders to a man—a calling not permitted to Mahomedans—and are natives of Shikarpur, in Sind. Their fathers came here, and their grandfathers; just as their sons and their grandsons will come. I met them again at Tashkent, hundreds of miles away on the *steppe*. They are a secretive clan; but I gathered that they will lend at 25 per cent., and a quick turnover. They live a mirthless life, without their women, and return to India when they have earned what they need.



As interesting as these are the tea dealers. These, too, are from British India, from Peshawar, and are Sunni Mahomedans of some standing; I came upon a well built caravanserai, where dwelt together eighty, and spoke with several who answered in good English. As agents, they cover the whole of Central Asia; and it is a Chinese green tea only which they supply.

The many mosques of Bokhara are venerable with age and sanctity; but they lack great architecture, and the tile work of most is falling into dilapidation. The holiness and fanaticism of this walled and foetid city seize you; but the Bokhara I shall remember is that human, coloured throng, those many vivid types of Asiatic men who have here come together.

Some one hundred and fifty miles east of Bokhara—no cloistered, fanatic city of the plains, but set upon breezy uplands, all in view of far-away, snow-capped ranges—is Samarkand. There is the new Samarkand—the Russian settlement, under avenues of immense trees—and over against it, a mile away, Samarkand itself, the city of song and story, the romantic spot of the world. This region is linked with the most distinguished of all dynasties. About five hundred years ago Samarkand was the capital of Timur, or Tamerlane, the master of Asia. This great man had roamed and conquered far and wide. Like Genghis, his ancestor, he cast his shadow as it were upon India, and saw the land to be good. His great-grandson, Baber, descended there once and for all, Mongol thus becoming Mogul, and a Sunni Mahomedan becoming Emperor of Hindustan; and the upland capital in Central Asia, a small place at the best, with its breezy open spaces, its irrigated meadows, its apricot and melon orchards, its territory where camels and horses, goats,

and the fat-tailed sheep grazed, slowly faded from its estate.

Yet Samarkand was immortal. At the time of Timur's death, still more in the century which followed, the city was one great jewel of tile work and mosaics, of deep, rich colours which reflected the sun on a thousand facets, so that the eyes turned for rest to the snow on the distant ranges.

Immortal to the memory; not, alas! to the eye. Samarkand lay in a seismic zone, and through the centuries one shock after another has damaged or laid low her fanes. Even in our own day, two peerless mosaics have crashed to earth; it is but a matter of time and all her glories will be gone.

I stood in the Registan of Samarkand—the market place. Upon one side were ranged the booths, where Sarts, Turcomans and Khirghiz of the *steppe* traded together, and upon the other three sides rose old mosques, their vast fronts covered with coloured tiles. The colours were of dark and light blue, yellow, green, white, richer and purer than one had ever seen, laid in many an arabesque, and the whole place, as the sun shone, was flashing like an opal. But one saw gaps; the walls were crumbling, and another shock might work irreparable loss. I passed through the mosque to their open courtyards behind. Here all was tiled, all was colour as before, and the dilapidation not so far gone.

Leaving the Registan, keeping to the open spaces, I visited the Mosque of Ishrat Khan. Its tiled glory of a few years before now lay a shrunken mass of bricks. Beyond the town, on a barren slope, there stands the tomb of Daniel, a slab long and low; tradition holds it to be ever-lengthening, and they worship here as at a holy place. Nearby is the Shah-i-Zindeh, a congeries of rock tombs of the ancient kings, embellished in tiles by

Timur, and these, set upon the desert's side, and of low structure, still flash their pristine beauties. Citywards, is the immense mausoleum of Bibi Khanum, the beloved wife of Timur, built as only he could have built it, now in ruins.

And here is the tomb of Tamerlane himself, where he was laid in "an ebony coffin, wrapped in linen, embalmed with musk and rose water." A block of black jasper seals it. Over it there rises an immense dome of turquoise blue, with richly tiled walls. A tiled minaret, a thing of the highest beauty, stood tall and slender beside it, but that like the rest has gone. Some day the blue dome too will fall crashing down, and Timur's peerless capital be levelled with the dust.

The tiles of Samarkand, the tiles upon the desert tombs of the Imāms, in their beauty like nothing on earth, come from the Persians of old. These men were of a race who had worshipped the sun; their sense of deep and pure colour was not a fortuitous thing. In the northern hills of Persia, lying in its matrix, the turquoise has ever been found. The early potters sought to reproduce its rich blue in their tiles, and by the use of copper in the firing were able to do so to perfection; a deeper blue being derived from mixing cobalt. The turquoise domes throughout these lands—on some great mosque, or village shrine, or upon tombs scattered over the waste—are numbered by hundreds; but this one rising over Timur's grave I hold to be the most glorious of all.

On a Friday, entering the Mosque of Tila-Kar in the Registan, passing through to the tiled courtyard behind, I came upon the Sarts of Samarkand at their prayers. Some thousands of men, in their brilliant gowns, knelt upon their praying carpets, swaying in long rows to and fro, while the *mullahs* cried the prayers in a high pitched voice. The sky was blue, all the walls of the mosque

and the courtyard sparkled, the men upon their carpets became one swaying mass of colour, and I knew that here in Central Asia I was looking on a scene matchless in the world.

At the port of Karachi, I awaited a steamer for the Persian Gulf. There was a day to spare, and on that day I drove across the Sind desert to Magar Pir. The road—the main road into Beluchistan—led over low rolling hills, and under the mellow sun, in the so balmy autumn air, the joy of living was upon me. A trotting camel, with bells, overtook me. Two men rode her, and between them, all gayly decked with ribbon, sat a placid kid. "O happy land of men and goats!" I cried, gulping the balmy air—and the camel passed over the next rise, going fast in her stride.

An hour later I came to the Pir—an enclosed pool beside a shrine. Its sacred waters seemed fouled, as after a struggle, and the king *magar*, a crocodile ten feet long, lay distended on the sand. The trotting camel stood nearby, browsing forage. The two men lay in the shade of palm trees, asleep. And the bedecked kid, an appeasement to the God of the Desert, was gone into the pool for ever and ever.

Near the head of the Gulf, a fine river enters the sea. They call it Shatt-el-Arab. It bears upon its bosom the waters of Tigris and Euphrates, which come together eighty miles from its mouth, and of the Karun, flowing south out of Persia. A few miles up Shatt-el-Arab, lies Busrah, a considerable port, metropolis of the world's dates, and of the liquorice root. Up-stream from Busrah, the date groves begin to thin out, the ploughed lands disappear; soon there is nothing but the stark desert. Here is the junction of Tigris with Euphrates. We sail up

Tigris, to the northwest, into Mesopotamia. The flat desert stretches far as the eye can reach. Many camps of Bedouins are seen, with their asses, and the fat-tailed sheep, squalid and primitive. To the north lie the Persian mountains, tipped with the early snow.

We have travelled up the river some hundreds of miles. Here, from out a date grove, rises a turquoise dome. It is the tomb of Ezra, the prophet; and when the boat has drawn into the bank, Mahomedans, Jews and Christians pass out, and worship together. Yonder, out over the desert, rise the stately ruins of Ctesiphon, the palace of King Darius. Small settlements of Chaldeans are passed. They are of a Semitic cast, although Christians, dwellers hereabouts from the dawn of things. Their young women, appallingly fat, wave from the banks.

Here at last, after six hundred miles of this tortuous waterway, is the City of Bagdad, lying on both sides the Tigris, with its bridge of boats, and all around it the desert. Many palm trees rise above it, and slender minarets, so that you look for the ancient Bagdad of romance. But that you shall not find; nothing but a tawdry place, bazaars of European goods, a glamourless city, made stinking by its many Jews. By night, when the moon rises over the palms, and its silver beam lies upon the river, you may recover the illusion; but it will vanish with the day.

Upon the southern bank, a few miles up stream, the swarming suburb of Kazimain clusters around a famous shrine. Gazing through its gateway, into the courtyard, I saw a splendid double mosque, its walls of tiled mosaic, its domes and minarets of beaten gold; and then the fanatic Shiah crowd hustled me away. Two of the Imāms lie buried here.

Across the southern desert from Bagdad, lying upon the banks of a dry channel of Euphrates, are extensive



ruins. Babylon, greatest city of the early world, stood here; but built only of brick, and now melted into a shapeless mass. Two miles up the channel, a smaller mass denotes the Tower of Babel. In Babylon, Nebuchadnezzar's gateway of victory still stands, decorated with the plaster *reliefs* of animals, and the archæologists showed me the ground plan of his palace; but all else seemed melted and shapeless. Jackals lurked in the ruins, blue pigeons flew from cave to cave, and where there had been fertility, lay the wide and stark desert.

Over this desert, wending across these Mesopotamia flats day after day, come small processions in a never-ending stream. Here is a group of horsemen, pilgrims from Teheran, shrilly singing as they near their long journey's end. Here is a train of pilgrims on foot—Persians too, rallying round a green flag. Here are veiled women riding asses, the men following afoot. Vehicles cross the desert, and old folk in litters, or astride emaciated horses, their faces strained and hectic. Many of these little processions are funerals, with the sewn-up corpse upon a litter, or lying across an ass; they come from over Northern Arabia, from the confines of Persia, from India, from all Islam—and they converge upon yonder holy desert city, whose golden minarets are shining across the plain.

It is Kerbela—the desert battlefield, where Hosein fell and the flower of the Shiahs—Kerbela the shrine, holiest spot in the Shiah world. Date palms rise about it. A canal from the Euphrates brings in water. For miles around the town there are graves. These funerals have been wending hither for a thousand years, and millions of the old have come to die here in sanctity. In this holy city there is a zonal tariff for burial. The graves of the rich are dug near the shrine, and yield a

princely income to its guardians; the poor and the unconsidered are laid far out in the desert.

An Arab city this, with many Persians inside it, and a continuous pilgrim traffic: a fanatic city too. Many a muttered curse followed me; and did I but dare stand before the doors of the holy courtyards, an angry crowd threatened violence. From the housetops, secretly, I looked down upon the courtyards, and saw those mosques which are the tombs of Hosein and Abbas. The walls of each were a-sparkle with Persian tiles, with mosaic, and arabesque, and holy Koranic scroll; the domes and the minarets were coated with beaten gold. In the courtyards there was hubbub, a great coming and going; dervishes stood there crying aloud, beggars lay covered with dreadful sores, a trade was doing in food and reliquaries; while many cast themselves upon the ground to pray. Across the housetops rose the palm trees; and beyond the city lay the many, many tombs. At the sunset, as I sat there on the roof, the *muezzins* came out on the golden minarets; as they raised their thin and tuneless chanting, a great silence fell upon the courtyards, and a strange glamour upon the Arabian desert.

When I left the Gulf, and left Islam, the steamer, a smallish boat, was loaded from end to end of her deck with Arab ponies, for sale in the markets of India. They had been driven down to the Gulf from Mosul, eight hundred miles up Tigris; and a wealthy Arab horse dealer, his servants, and a round dozen *syces* were with them on the boat. We slept on deck, shoulder to shoulder, hardly clear of the horses' hoofs; and each morning, while it was yet dark, a good hour before the dawn, I saw these horsey Mahomedans rise, orient themselves, and softly chant their prayers. They lay down again, and slept; but by sunrise their cooks had prepared the morning meal,

and master and men squatted round a pile of rice, stained yellow with saffron, and a stew of mutton, floating in its fat. These being despatched, bowls of water, with napkins, were brought, fingers were washed, cups of strong Arabian coffee handed round, and all lay luxuriously back to smoke.

This hour before dawn is a solemn and a wonderful hour throughout Islam. There are the shrill cries of *muezzins* at sunrise, and at that moment, especially over the desert, strange and lovely effects cross the sky. But it is this full hour before the dawn, this period in the blackness of the night, when wanderers find themselves nearest Islam's soul.

At this hour, over these far-flung lands: in the small towns of Algeria and Morocco, out on the Sahara, in Damascus, on the wooded hillsides of Asia Minor, in the foetid bazaars of Turkestan, in the valley of Kashmir, in the caravanserais of Persia, and in the sacred places of Arabia itself, holy men arise from their couches, and seeking the housetops, or other open spaces, turn Meccawards.

And from many a mouth, presently, arises a chanting, high and thin, in a key the darkness cannot discover; so thin! so tuneless! yet carrying far out over the housetops to the desert beyond. There is something deeply mysterious in this holy crying. In the night, at Kerbela, it brought me rushing to the roof. In the vaulted bazaar of Bagdad, at three in the morning, I came upon a blind man—a beggar, alone, deserted even by the pariah dogs—who sat on the ground singing. He sang without tune, without rhythm, in a pitch of voice till then unimagined by me; and as his chant went reverberating down the dark vaults, I shook with horror and with joy.

## CHAPTER XV

### INDIA

THE monsoon, which had blown so strongly from May to August, was over. The sea now lay in oily calm, and steaming through the hot, moonless night we cut the water with hardly a ripple. The ship's bells, fore and aft, had struck midnight.

My mattress had been carried up from below, but on this last night of the voyage there was to be little rest for those who slept on deck. Belated revellers held the smoking room till after one o'clock. Even as they left, the *serang* was whistling, and soon an endless stream of lascars began to file past with the mail bags. By three o'clock a light showed on the port bow, and after a time a second light, red, and low down. Presently a man was calling the lead, and by four we were going dead slow. The telegraph rang in the engine room, a voice called from the bridge, and in the darkness the anchor rattled overboard.

Then these noises of the night died down. The mail was stacked—thousands upon thousands of sacks—the lascars were gone from the deck, the engines were at rest; for two hours now, in the silence, I lay down and slept.

And then it was dawn—dawn in the estuary of Bombay, with the long wooded strip of Colaba running out to sea, a grey mass of shipping, the misty buildings and domes of a city. In the South and East, far over the water, range upon range of hills came to life. Against

the nearer horizons, as the light strengthened, scattered palm trees stood out, the undulations of the slopes took on shape; but the further ranges seemed part of some far remote country. A fleet of fishing boats already sailed from this country, making for the open sea; while even as I watched, craft put out from Bombay, from Elephanta I land, and from all about the estuary. The sun now rose in fiery gold.

Several lighters, for the mail and for the parcels post, ranged alongside the steamer, and in these, for their loading, stood some hundreds of brown men. Thin and shrivelled, wearing only loin cloths, these were of the ruck of India, low caste Hindus, doomed by their gods, Krishna and Kali, to a life of toil. Their heads were mostly bare—yet what was sun or sweat to them? Personality they had none; their effacement, as they stood together in the lighter's well, was clear to see.

Under the scorching sun, I landed on the Ballard pier. I was in India! This was the sixth time, yet her glamour lay upon me as it had ever lain. I recalled Benares, Lahore, Jodhpur, Trichinopoly; the Taj, Mount Abu, Chittoor, Amber and Fathepur Sikri; the lake at Udaipur, the rhododendrons in the Himalayas, the sunrise over Kinchinjunga, the ride out of Peshawar to the Khyber Pass, the Jhelum River in Kashmir; I thought of journeys into the *mofussil*, of tents slept in, of servants softly waking me, of *bheestis* discharging their goatskins for my bath; I thought of pipes playing and drums throbbing, of the creaking of wells, of the crooning of kites, of the betel nut vendors under *banyan* trees, of the colour in a Rajputana crowd. I thought too of all her underlying horror; of the deadly squalor and misery, the emaciated and casteless, the merciless money lenders; of sallow Eurasians doomed to the isolation of their own class, of the torture from mosquitoes, the stench in



a million huts, the stifling nights, the dead carried on bamboo poles to the burning; more than all I thought of the heat, of this morning's scorching sunrise, of to-morrow's, of a land which had not cooled since the beginning of time, of the sun-curse which lies upon India for ever and ever.

This was our holy ground too. Here had come the pick of our race, soldiers and civilians, for generations. Here our national character was being moulded. How well I knew these things! My ancestors had come out to the Presidencies for a hundred years; my mother had been born here; this land had affected my very blood.

Then I passed into the crowded streets, into the throng of Bombay; where a hundred races go outwardly brilliant, inwardly ravening; where, in the great bazaars, silver and gold and pearls are hoarded, and men live like rats; where motor car jostles bullock cart; where those dead of the plague are carried naked, or sewn in white muslin, to the burning; where Parsi Towers of Silence, vulture circled, look down from Malabar; where the old trees cast quiet shade on Colaba, and the wide waters of bay and estuary sparkle in the sun.

Upon the vast face of India there is hardly a spot so venerated as Puri. This holy place, near the shore of the sea, was a shrine in dim antiquity; and when, a thousand years ago, they set up here the temple of Jaganath, Puri's sanctity was sealed for evermore. Hither, through the centuries, have journeyed holy men and pilgrims, and each year, as the festival of the god comes round, at least one hundred thousand Hindus resort to his shrine.

The temple lies within high walls. Hewn lions guard the four entrances; crouching elephants of stone, small

shrines, and sacred bo-trees line the flights of steps which lead up to the holy place. An infidel like myself, standing by the gates, may see these; but the mystic rites, the obscene carvings, the strange music, the rhythmic swaying of the nautch girls, and the daily and nightly toilet of the god, are for the shaven and pallid priests, the monks, the novitiates, the army of temple attendants, and the pilgrims who swarm up the steps and pass out of sight.

At the great shrines of the world I have always found the vilest men, and in the crowd standing about the temple of Jaganath there were most evil faces. But it must be said for these Hindus—these Uriyas of Orissa—that numbers of both sexes were physically splendid, and the faces of many in that crowd frank and charming.

Before the main gate was stretched a *fakir*, with tight-closed eyes. He lay on sackcloth, he was smeared with ashes, he would lie there rigid perhaps a week; and the pious, as they passed by, dropped a farthing in his bowl. Here were the money changers, the sellers of flower garlands, of rice and sweetmeat offerings for the god. Booths stood all around, catching the pilgrims' eye, and one saw a steady trade in local trinkets, in reliquaries, in sacred literature, and in garish prints of the shrine. Troops of monkeys, clansmen of the god Hanuman, lined the high temple walls, springing thence to the branches of the *peepul* trees; flights of pigeons descended upon those who bestowed grain, and the sacred humped cattle, pure white, and nosing all that was similitude of green food, passed from group to group. Somewhere a drum throbbed—a solitary drum; but on the great day of festival drums and pipes are playing without end. On that day, amid the emotional ecstasy of the pilgrims, a procession descends these steps, and the god Jaganath (whom some call Juggernaut) is borne to his car. He is a log of wood,

crudely carved in man's image. His chariot is forty-five feet high, rides on sixteen wheels, and is joyfully dragged by four thousand two hundred men of the surrounding community.

The god is drawn to his country house, a mile distant, and after a week is drawn back through dense crowds to his temple. Police guard the route, and it is many years now since his chariot wheels took a human life; nor has another royal Hindu, dying, again willed a Koh-i-nur to the shrine. These as may be: but the god's prestige remains as of yore; it is a poor year for the temple when the high priest of Jaganath fails to take in twelve lakhs of rupees.

A mile away from the temple, the Bay of Bengal lay sparkling in the afternoon sun. Here was a long stretch of sandy beach, a village of fisher huts, and a strange race of people fishing. Than the finer Uriyas, these were a lower race altogether; they seemed casteless—non-Hindu. One saw that the temple, with its rites, meant nought to them, but only fish, and fishing, and the long pulling in of the nets.

This afternoon there was good fishing. There was great activity along the beach, and presently there came a net toward the shore leaping with life. This was a Sunday; and on a Sunday, sixteen years before, on just such a beach, Indians had dragged in another net that leapt. That was outside Durban; where I counted, for the one haul, twelve hundred fine Cape salmon. Then my thoughts went back to Africa, and to long reverie of the days that were gone. . . . When I rose up from the sand it was dark, and the fishers were gone from the beach.

A night in the train from Puri, skirting the coast of Bengal, and I found myself in Howrah; Calcutta lay

over the Hooghly. A great bridge thither, and an endless stream of people passed over. From the bridge one saw many ocean steamers at anchor in the stream. Small craft lay massed round them, and tug boats, their syrens blowing, towed the laden lighters to and fro; distant thickets of masts showed further down, and a very welter of native shipping.

Just above the bridge, on the Calcutta side, were the bathing *ghats*. It was high tide, and a thousand Hindus, caste-marked on the forehead, stood waist deep, laving themselves, washing mouth and teeth. Endless warehouses were to be seen, and upstream and down the high chimneys of the jute mills. Jute was the biggest industry here. It had made Calcutta second city of the Empire. Holding a world monopoly, they shipped the raw material to Dundee or Hamburg, and the milled article, gunnies and the like, to the ends of the earth. But Calcutta had much more than jute. This low-lying, riverine city—"power on silt"—was the export centre for a dozen world staples. A hundred and fifty miles inland were the Bengal coalfields, fed by several railways; train loads of coal for export came rattling into Howrah day and night. There was tea. From Darjeeling, from Assam, from all the Himalayan foothills, came thousands of tons, neatly packed in 80 lb. boxes, and many a steamer sailed out laden with tea to the hatches. There was rice—a great staple—and grains, and oil seed. There were hides, and indigo, and shellac, and opium, to say nothing of the immense imports; and seeing these things I wondered at Calcutta's vast shipping no longer.

A mile below the bridge, on the city side, lay a great park. This was the Maidan, two miles long, an expanse of green turf set aside in the long ago, now all sylvan with old trees, and the glory of Calcutta. To the Maidan, in the early mornings, came Mahomedan grooms with

their horses, a Hindu dairyman with many cows, a shepherd with a flock of goats, lusty young British cyclists out for a sweat. Here, when the sun was high, came mild, spectacted strollers, like Parsis, and plump *babus*, to sit in the shade and talk, gardeners from the municipal flower beds, to rest, and the sad out of the great city, to cast themselves down and sleep. Here, in the cool, came sportsmen; young Eurasians, with bat and ball, talking a strange English, the members of a stylish British tennis club, playing on lawns set apart, teams of Hindu cricketers fantastic in their muslin skirts, or a crowd of soldiers, to witness regimental hockey.

Set about the Maidan are the statues of viceroys and famous soldiers. Facing Government House is Lord Lawrence, and near him Canning, queller of the mutiny. Curzon and Dufferin are far out, Napier and Outram too, and Lord Mayo, who was stabbed dead as he set foot on the Andaman Islands. But I saw no statue to Warren Hastings, and it is only now, in the garden of Belvedere, that the British community have raised a statue to Clive.

From Calcutta to the sea is eighty miles. The channel for big steamers is ever-shifting and treacherous, so that they only pass up and down Hooghly on the flood-tide. The coast here, for some hundreds of miles, is delta. Thickly muddied with the converged flow of Hooghly, Ganges and Brahmaputra, the waters of the ocean are shallow far out.

Northeast of this silting sea is Chittagong, an hour's steaming up a river, whence I took the train into Assam. Here was a country greener, fresher than Bengal, with a heavy rainfall, luxuriant rice lands, vast backgrounds of jungle. Next day it was all jungles, the train high in the hills, the air noticeably chill, and the few natives about of a Thibetan cast. The night closed in with



gusts of rain. Morning of the third day, forty hours out from Chittagong, had brought us near the northeast corner of India. By analogy with yesterday, we should have been high up in mountains, amid cold and rain, making for God knows where. In reality, the sun was shining, the air mellow, and the train crossed a low-lying plain. Cleared of the pristine jungle, this land was planted mile upon mile with tea; coolies from Central India picked it, and one saw British planters pass from gang to gang.

Presently the train came to the bank of a wide, sandy river, where it finally stopped. A native town lay close by. Beyond it, along the river front, stood the bungalows of a British cantonment, and of civilians and planters, set in an expanse of green turf, amid the finest old trees. Across the river, on whose broad sands lay many herds of cattle, rose a great forest. It stretched back seemingly thirty miles, to a mountain range, itself forest-clad, running East and West far as the eye could see.

The settlement was Dibrugarh. These mountains were the foothill range of the Eastern Himalayas. The river was the Brahmaputra, coming by mysterious, unknown gorges, not so far from here, out of the Abor country and Tibet. The whole panorama was enchanting. In this dry, cool weather I rated Dibrugarh the finest spot in India, and these nearby tea gardens the Elysian fields.

But I was not here to tarry. A river steamer was to sail for Calcutta at dawn. She lay moored below Dibrugarh, beside trees, and I went aboard her to sleep. The night air was cold, yet a mist had risen in the trees to half their height, had gathered up its skirts, and now lay around the grove as a white girdle. The moon came up over the corner of India, and in her train swept fantastic cloud shapes out of Tibet. I looked again, and they were gone; where they had been, wisps of cirrus now

floated, wonderfully high. The forest beyond the river, and the far mountains, stood in clear light, and a beam of silver lay on the glassy water.

At this moment, invisible to me, some native played on a reed. His notes were limpid, his cadences swift and delicate, and presently it seemed as if all the night bent to listen. His theme was a minor, immemorial to this land; yet borne on vibrant ether, it struck the moonbeam into a myriad fractures, and the waters of Brahmaputra danced for joy. His enchantment lay on him a few moments only, then he ceased; but his music had been added to the magic concomitants of this night.

For several hundred miles the river flowed nearly due west. Still lay that dense forest along the north bank, still beyond it rose the distant hills. The hills, forest clad, were always blue. South of Bhutan, one looked, and behold! a white range towered in their rear. Near the village of Tezpur, tea planters were settled north of the river. One spoke of them as unæsthetic folk, sunk in polo, yet, had they been so minded, there was a view of blue mountains, and white, rising in perspective behind green bamboos, that one might gaze upon for ever.

And then the river turned due south, leaving mountains and forests behind, heading into the heart of Bengal. The waters widened, often to a mile or more, and on the yellow sandbanks, in the hot afternoon sun, crocodiles lay basking. Wherever one looked now was a village. Thousands upon thousands was the tale of them. Their people, owning all the land around, tilled from morning to night; and I realised the meaning of these peasant communities to India.

The village always lies in trees. Around the huts may be plantains, cocoanut palms, mangoes or bamboos; some larger grove will be close by, and dotted over the plain are patches of thick jungle. The best of the village

land is given over to rice, which springs up emerald green, and by harvest is yellow, but the grazing land may often be clean turf, wooded like an English park. If away from running stream, a draw-well serves the village; but there are few without some tank or waterhole, where the grown men and women bathe or wash their clothes, the children disport themselves, and the working buffaloes lie in mud and water up to their snouts. There is plenty of bird life about. At the dawn crows cry harshly. Ever bold and daring after scraps of food, they are yet as nothing to the kites, with their crooning whistles, who swoop down in the twinkling of an eye. The tickeater bird perches on the backs of the cattle, ringdoves coo in the trees, the kingfisher flutters by, flashing his blue sheen, the green parrots, with their quick cries, are constantly on the wing. Small squirrels share the branches with them, and in the trees about the water-hole frolic a troop of monkeys.

At dawn the village stirs. The dogs are about, mangy, and of that dirty yellow that is pariah. Smoke rises from the first cooking. Before sunrise the men have yoked up the ploughing oxen, leading them to the rice lands. The milking cattle and the goats, or it may be the fat tailed sheep, are driven to the grazing by boy shepherds, and the low-caste women go out in search for fuel. If the village is a large one, a market is held. Piles of rice and grains are set out, and there are sellers of ground nuts, chilis, fruits and sweetmeats. Most frequented is the seller of betel nut. For half a farthing he will supply the smooth, veinless leaf, the nut, and the pinch of moistened lime, which are rolled up together, placed in the mouth, and chewed for hours and hours. All the people of India, men and women, chew the betel; so that their teeth become black, their mouth cavity a

horror of red, and their spittle, which they squirt freely about, a thick vermilion.

One had not realised the affluence of these Bengali peasants. The land is their own, the flocks, the stacks; there is running water too, with fish for the catching, and seasons that may be relied on. There is time and to spare for a day's holiday, or a wedding in a nearby village, and a fair, or some religious festival will draw a brightly dressed multitude. There are some who own their *ekka*, drawn by a trotting bullock, and many have a buried store of silver rupees. Greatest value of all are the ornaments of the womenfolk; the hoarded gold of India in these is beyond compute.

At sunset, the day's work ended, village elders assemble upon some patch of sward. This will lie beneath a spreading *banyan*, and as talk and argument are the Bengalis' birthright, there will be no lack. In a town—in Dacca or Barisal, or Khulna—in these days, there would be much diatribe against government; but not so here. In his heart the villager is for the *sahib*. The British have brought him peace, protection of property, a fair market, and no interference; that the *Brahmin*, the fat *babu*, or *bania*, talk and promise as he may, would bring him these, he thinks by no means certain. And so the villagers eschew politics, and talk of what concerns them more. First, and most serious, is the malaria. They have heard, these many years, that malaria can be stamped out. So say the *sahibs*, yet they, the villagers, continue to suffer and to die, just as they did before. Then they talk of their flocks, of the better price for hides, of the increasing cost of food, of a nearby festival, and of the coming monsoon.

It is now well into the dusk. This has been a breathless day, and the huts lie in an acrid pall of smoke and dust. Strange smells from the cooking hang about, and

the unpleasant reek of men and animals rises. About this time the flights of rice-birds pass overhead; graceful, white things these, like the ibis, they fly with a slow movement into the night. Now, too, the frogs croak loudly, there is the droning of multitudinous crickets, and the mosquitoes, flying up from the tank, add their midget hum. Despite the dogs, the jackals are at hand—all round the village; in the confines they are crying like a lost child, and will soon emerge from among the trees. It is now very dark. The children lie asleep in the huts. Some of the men, their heads wrapped in a shawl, are laid upon stretcher bedsteads in the open, but mostly the people spend the nights behind closed doors and in foul air. A drum beats in the village, alone and solemnly, and with it, presently, rise the minor notes of a reed pipe; but these only for a few moments, leaving the night to the cries of the jackals.

The day has been reasonably happy, and the villagers, untouched by modern subtleties, lie down in contentment to sleep. If needs were, these humble peasants would lie down in contentment to die.

Brahmaputra meeting with Ganges, the two rivers flow as one to the delta lands, where they become lost in a maze of channels. Threading these tortuously, the steamer passed from out the fertile village country, into the jungle of the *Sundarbuns*. In this wild and lonely stretch there are no human beings for a hundred miles; but the steamer's searchlight, turned suddenly on by night, may flash upon a tiger on the bank, or upon wild boar swimming the waterway. To me, who sat patiently till midnight, no beast was revealed; but upon the smooth waters, when day broke, lay the eyes and snouts of many crocodiles—triangles of observation, which sank, as we neared them, with never a ripple.



Through the *Sundarbuns* I was alone upon the boat. It was Christmas afternoon, and as I sat at my tea there entered the butler, his assistant, and the cook, spick and span in clean turbans, bearing sweetmeats, and a beflagged cake, sugared with the word "Christmas." These being set before me, an awkwardness fell upon them; but upon receipt of a ten rupee note they brightened, *salaamed* profoundly, and withdrew. With the low-caste sweeper, peering round the door, who had prepared me hot baths very faithfully, I dealt separately. Next day, passing from the *Sundarbuns* into the Hooghly, we paddled up the river to Calcutta. The voyage from Dibrugarh, of eleven days, had been just 1100 miles.

In Calcutta the racing carnival had begun. The Maidan had taken on a fresh aspect. Down in one corner lay the course, spacious and circular, and the people of the city, streaming across in their holiday colours, stood wedged there like a rainbow. Over against the masses rose the grand-stand, and in the velvety paddock, on the lawn that stretched beneath old trees, moved a great gathering of the British, and the native gentry of half India. The Viceroy had driven up in state, cynosure of all eyes. Maharajahs were there, the cadets of many ruling houses, the titular princes of Bengal, and the great zemindars. Some of these were running their horses, and I heard them coach the white jockeys in idiomatic English.

There were many other Indians on the lawn, men less highly placed. They rubbed shoulders, they talked racing with the principal British in India; and I learned once more, at this Viceroy's Cup, that the bigger the official, or the truer the man, the more courteous he is to natives, high and low. The governor, the commissioner, the judge—the *sahib*, whoever or whatever he be—consolidates India for us; it is the subaltern, the captain's lady raw from home, the engineer's assistant, the railway employé, some

planters' womenfolk, and many a clerk, eager to show how white and British and far-removed they are, who often throw us back.

One morning, as the sun lit up the golden pinnacles on the palace of the Maharajah, my motor car passed out of Mysore City. For fifty miles the road lay under *banyans*, old and stately, hanging with their shrivelled red figs, in whose branches there leapt and cavorted, venerated and fed by Hindu wayfarers, hundreds upon hundreds of monkeys. The peasantry were all afield, and along the road went herdsman driving their cattle, their goats, and their flocks of brown, biblical sheep. To the South there lay a vast forest, where grew most of the world's sandalwood; it spread over Southwest Mysore, over Coorg, and over the Wynaad, where the coffee planters of India are gathered. Beyond it rose the Nilgiri Hills. Upon their summits lie rolling, grassy downs like nothing in India, and beyond the downs Ootacamund, a hill-station in a thousand, where I had seen many of our retired people living in the cool.

The car speeds onward. Now we are out of Mysore, and pass through the forests of Coorg. The villages have died out; but through the forest come many trains of covered carts, carriers between the coast and the interior. Each is drawn by two bullocks, smallish beasts, humped, and mostly pure white, who glance at you with extraordinary intelligence. Tended with care, they are sleek and glossy, and their horns, which often lie back with the sweep of the sable antelopes', are tipped with ornaments. Between them and their Hindu drivers exists a deep comprehension; in the midday hours, when they rest, when men and beasts lie asleep by the roadside beneath the trees, you will see many a black, human head pillowed on a white hide.

The fine looking Mysore peasants had merged into the inferior folk of Coorg; now I came to a village where half the men were of a strong Semitic cast—they might be almost Arabs. As I neared the coast the country opened out, the Arab-like population vastly increased. They looked to be prosperous—producers of cardamoms, of ginger, of cocoanuts, of pepper—which their women, sitting by the doors, were sifting. Presently we drove into Tellicherry, lying on the seashore of the Malabar Coast.

From here I took the road to the South. It was now the hour before sunset, when that deep glamour falls upon India, when all her people and their domestic animals seem to be out in the open. Ox-carts, pony-carts, porters staggering under their heavy loads, passed in a long stream; herds of cattle and goats blocked the way; at each village a seething crowd of men and children, of dogs and fowls shriekingly gave us passage. Not in anger—these people were happy and contented; from the men I received a thousand *salaams*, from the children a thousand nods and smiles. A serenity of mind came over me. My reserve, as never before in India, seemed to fall away. I was no longer just the *sahib*, grave and remote; as between man and man, I threw in a smile here, a wave of the hand there, nor had I any cause to repent it. We passed through Mahé, a tiny French settlement upon the coast, and across two rivers, where the ferrymen sang as they pulled; it was quite dark when we drove along the beach at Calicut, and drew up at the club.

At sunrise next morning, when I looked from my window, the ocean lay calm and sparkling. It was, I have no doubt, just such a morning, in May, 1498, when Vasco de Gama sailed in here and cast anchor, the first European to reach India by sea. Along the level beach many fishing boats put out, and in the deeper water a number of larger craft rode at anchor. These were *dhow*s, of the

Arab type, many of them trading direct with Arabia and the Persian Gulf; timber, fibre and spices being carried thither, and cargoes of dates brought over to India. Arabs, in their Arab dress, and but lately come from Arabia, walked the beach. Their forebears had been sailing to this coast before any white man. Marrying the Malabar women, nicknamed Mopilahs, or Moplals—the “sons-in-law”—they had permeated the whole of Malabar with their strain; it was their Arab-like descendants I had been passing through yesterday.

Further down this coast, a land of cocoanuts, and rice fields, and rolling jungle, lies Cochin. Its capital is built upon a lagoon, a backwater of the ocean, reached by a boat journey of three miles. It was moonlight when they rowed me across the lagoon, the coconut forests all silvery, and when we had skirted the fairy-like isle of the British Residency, the boatmen broke into a chant-like song.

But the glamour of the night waned to a dreadful day. Many thousands dwell in Cochin, yet each fifth man, it seemed to me, and a multitude of women went horrible with elephantiasis. It is a disease in which the legs grow greater from the knee down, and the foot swells to a shapeless mass; in which the victims drag themselves along with loathing, and the stranger, coming suddenly upon them, can hardly contain his vomit.

Cochin is Hindu. I suppose that tens of thousands of her afflicted, entering their temples, have cast themselves beseeching before Brahma, Vishnu, Shiva, the mystic trinity. Not less than twenty Christian sects, too, with their missionaries, have prayed these hundred years for a surcease. In vain! Elephantiasis is in the nature of a minute worm or a microbe, and it is not upon record that these have been exorcised through prayer. If Cochin

waits on the old gods, she may wait for ever. But I name to her rulers, and to the missionaries, a New God—Pasteur, the dead Frenchman—the founder of bacteriology, into whose view there first swarmed these minute hosts; and I assure them that if relief is to come, it can and will only come through one of his followers.

Here is Trivandrum, capital of Travancore State, and here, down at the extremity of India, India's finest looking people. The Arab type is gone. It is replaced by the Nairs, a high-caste, from among whose women, strangely pale-skinned, the Maharajahs of Travancore must be born, and by a yet higher caste—the Brahmins: that is to say by types purely Hindu. The Brahmins are in the ascendant here. The walled fort, a city within the city, is set apart for them; their great temple, just without the palace walls. I, the infidel, dared not approach. The Maharajah, of the lengthiest Hindu lineage in existence, because of his lowlier Nair mother, must place himself under their ministrations.

And yet, with its militant Hinduism, Travancore is the most Christian state in India, one-third of the people calling themselves Christ's followers. Missionaries of many sects swarm here—men and women of all sorts and conditions; and whilst these, for example, of the Belgian Carmelites carry neither scrip nor wallet, those of the London Mission ride comfortably in their motors. The Syrians came here early, Christianising, and at a later day Xavier, converting the fisher folk, who remain Catholic to this day. The new native converts are mostly Catholics. The Eurasians of Travancore, too, as of the rest of India, are overwhelmingly Catholic. The Roman Church lays itself out for these people, and accords them some social recognition; neither the British community, nor their churches, have ever done that.



Rising at four in the morning to pray, living retired and secluded in his palace, the Maharajah of Travancore, through his *dewan*, rules the state with a rod of iron, and rules it well. English is the official language, which he speaks perfectly, as do the many high Hindu officials to whom he daily gives audience.

The staple of Travancore is the cocoanut. There is large export both of coir—the fibre, and of copra—the dried flesh. Physically, this state's finest product is her people; some pure and persisting strains have been built up in this corner of India. Mentally, though, I am not so sure. Education, here as elsewhere in India, is opening many subtle minds, and lets loose a flood of words; but it is unable to discover men of action, or men of high character. These educated persons study for the law, which is the curse of India, or they enter official life. Once in office, a majority do not scruple to accept bribes, the way of the oriental from time immemorial. But the right and honest handling of money has become the basis of all modern government; and just how the educated Indians, with this damnable obliquity in their nature, expect to govern India themselves, and not see it collapse inside a decade, I fail to understand. . . .

I was now come to Madras, the "withered beldame" of British India: a city of great spaces, and old, old British bungalows beneath their trees, yet a city scorched by the sun and withered, of teeming slums, of much poverty. My vessel was come, and I drove with my luggage to the harbour. My servant, a man of this city, was to remain here. He had been a faithful servant to me, and now, in farewell, he bent over my hand, brushing it with his lips. He was weeping. I watched him, a white figure, walk down the road and disappear in the throng; then I boarded the steamer, and presently set sail for the Straits Settlements.

## CHAPTER XVI

### CHINA AND COCHIN CHINA

IN the five days steaming from India to the Straits, you pass from the East to the Far East; from parched and desert-like countries, to a tremendous rainfall, rich tropic growths, forests without end; from peoples whose thoughts dwell much upon religion and death, to peoples who take life as it comes, who like to laugh and joke, to whom religion and the gods are vague and shadowy.

So we come to Singapore, down among the islands of the Archipelago. Just one hundred years ago, the eagle eye of our countryman Stamford Raffles lit upon this island; and having made himself agreeable to the Sultan of Johore, he departed with the title deeds in his pocket. A fishing village of Malays then stood on Singapore: the rest was jungle; but Raffles knew what he was about.

Landing to-day, you enter a city of a quarter of a million; Singapore has become the eighth port in the World, and the most strategic site, I rather imagine, in all the Seven Seas. Malays are the people of the region, but in these Singapore crowds you will scarcely see one Malay in twelve. There are Tamils, Sikhs and Bengalis from India; Arabs, Javanese, Japanese, white-suited Europeans; but the people of Singapore, as to nine out of ten, are pure-blooded Chinamen. Call it 230,000 Chinese. Think of them as living far south of China—almost on the Equator; yet so adapted to their new environment as to outdistance others, own nearly all this city, and hold

its future in the hollow of their hands. And as Singapore is but one spot out of many they frequent, clearly the Chinese can be no ordinary folk.

The British, travelling in the saloon, have overrun the face of the earth. The Chinese, going steerage, or on deck, have done very much the same. The Cantonese, especially, are renowned cosmopolitans; a tally of the corpses sent back to Canton for burial, and of Cantonese who lie buried in every corner of the world, would astonish.

When gold was discovered in California, the Chinese arrived in their thousands. When it was discovered in Australia and New Zealand, they appeared in their tens of thousands. Very many lived and died in those parts; but their bodies were sooner or later sent to China for burial, often at a cost of a hundred pounds for each. Later, they permeated British Columbia, and all the Pacific Slope down to Mexico; numbers, too, settled in easterly cities like Chicago and New York. Many thousands went to labour in the sugar fields of Peru, and to British Guiana, Mauritius, Tahiti, Samoa and other islands up and down the tropics. The furniture of very many cities, whether it be Calcutta or San Francisco, is made locally by Chinamen, and they seem to do the cooking and washing and market gardening for half the foreign world. Excepting only Japan, they have spread over, and look like possessing, the Further East. They do the hard work of Eastern Siberia. They conduct the big business of Cochin China. They lie like a blanket over Siam, and they are slowly closing on Burma. I marvelled to see what they had made of Hong Kong; while from such bases as Singapore, Kuala Lumpur and Penang they have overrun the whole of Malaya, and made it to-day great and wealthy. Their instinct for tropical lands, and developing them, is as keen as our own, and nowhere

do you see their powers and mastery better displayed than in the island empire of the Dutch Indies. The people of those parts are as children in their hands. The Dutch rulers, taking note of this, have closed Java to the Chinese, except under restrictions, but their community in Java is already large and prosperous. They are the making of the remoter islands. Large towns in Sumatra, in Banka, in Borneo, are almost entirely Chinese, and in a thousand spots up and down the vast Archipelago some Chinese community is settled and thriving.

They are tireless workers. The heat is as nought to them; indoors or out, you will see them always at it; yet they live vividly, and take their pleasures. They are a queer compound of cleanliness and filth. And how they breed! No such fecundity has been known in human-kind. Chinese cities are just spawning beds; along these tropical rivers where they settle, where Nature herself spawns so riotously, litters of children are born as it were overnight.

My first impression of the Chinese at home was of their seamanship. I disembarked in the Chefoo roads in a gale; the way *sampans* and small sailing boats were handled that day was a revelation. Aside from European vessels, there is immense shipping on the China Coast. Innumerable fishing craft put out from a hundred harbours. Thousands of cargo junks ply everywhere, and native-owned steamers, from the diminutive up to two and three thousand tons, are numerous. My mental picture of the Coast is of tossing seas; and it is also of a born race of seamen, alert and reliant, in all sorts of weird craft, boldly riding their crests.

Then I saw the Chinese were trustworthy. In the treaty ports, in Hong Kong every British bank, every European store and business were manned by them, and

they fingered the cash. Even in Japan, the Europeans brought in Chinese clerks, and throughout the East a business Chinaman's word was his bond.

And I saw they were what the Scotch call "gutsy." Alone among orientals they pandered to the belly. In Chinese towns hucksters stood at each few yards. They dealt in every form of food, from pasty sweetmeats to giant radishes, doing a roaring trade. Retailers of sweet, coloured drinks, loudly calling their wares, seemed to ensnare each sweating coolie rid of his load, each 'ricksha puller awaiting a fresh fare. The numerous eating houses, hung gorgeously with paper lanterns, displayed food in endless variety—dried and cooked fish of many sorts, piles of cooked rice, meat stews, vegetable stews—a hundred savoury messes and relishes; while from the beams above hung cooked, dried ducks, baskets of long-buried eggs, *beche de mer*, dried octopus, the tit-bits appertaining to pork, and all the other delicacies of the season. The eating tables, overlapping into the narrow streets, seemed always crowded; and with bustle, in a great clatter, to the music of eating-house orchestras—of pipes, stringed instruments, cymbals, bones and gongs—China fed itself. The impression was not of gorging—the negotiation of the chop-sticks is too deliberate for that—but of a series of relishes eaten with true gusto; these people, if a trifle less dainty in palate, were as human as ourselves.

These on the material side. Of a China that is not material, of products of art, things of beauty—an altar perhaps, a temple, a gateway, the line of a roof, a vase, a bit of ceramic, a mandarin's robe—I had many a glimpse. They showed a perception as pure and classic as ever came out of Greece. These stood, in a degree, for a China of long ago; yet for a one and only China, artistically supreme, whose genius, I was to find, had



moulded all art and beauty throughout the Far East.

As sailors, bankers, merchants, mechanics, miners, artists, humourists—in a hundred capacities—the Chinese meet us on our own ground, where there is liking and mutual respect. They have strong personality, splendid qualities. They are peace-loving, and hold fast to family life. In this vast population there are sea pirates, many opium fiends, many abandoned criminals, cut-throats of all sorts; there is misgovernment by officials, bribery and corruption in high places, even torture; but the mass of the people are vastly industrious, sober, right living, and humorous, as is known to all who accurately observe. That is not to say they are enlightened. They are superstitious, full of vain imaginings, impervious it would almost seem to true knowledge. They are utterly callous, and, judged by our standards, cruel. Still, there are the fine qualities, and the strong personality. The Chinese will need a Western people to see them through. For none so much as the British have they affinity; and I beg our people that they let no others usurp this.

A host of mine at Hankow, an Englishman, was reputed the best tea-taster in China. His stock in trade was his palate, and some forty tiny, handleless cups, and he earned an income many would envy. Towards eleven in the morning, and the cups, infused with the day's testings, being set in a row, my friend appeared. Sniffing first, he sipped each cup daintily as a bird, made as if to gargle, covered his palate with the liquor, and stood a moment or two, reflective; then, swallowing hardly a drop, spat out. When he had come to the end of the line, those forty teas had been irrefutably classified; and I learned from him what indeed I knew already—what the Russians, who are the knowing tea drinkers, know—that China tea is the incomparable article.

I saw a harvest on the central plain of China, and in the province of Honan came to vast coal beds, where a mining industry was springing up. Beyond the coal, in Shansi, there are iron deposits. These seem so immense, so near coal, that this part of China may one day displace Pennsylvania as the producer of steel; but not in our time. The empire may split first, and go to pieces. There may emerge five or six Chinas. If she stakes her future on democracy, there probably will.

It was winter when I went into Manchuria, and for the first time I knew excessive cold. Had a wind swept across these plains, the cold had been unendurable; but the weather at that time was still and sunny.

This great Chinese province was a flat land, of deep, black soil, eastern extension of the lengthy Siberian food belt. Like its big mules, the men it bred were of a super-type—six-footers, straight and strong; a people rid of their weaklings, well-to-do, each man and woman in fur jacket and cap. Sturdy Russian Cossacks across the border would rejoice in this wintry Manchu land, where the little brown Japs would shrivel up. But a food belt is a food belt; and one saw the day they would all come to grips for its ultimate possession. Then I crossed over into Korea.

The "Hermit Kingdom" adjoins, and was sometime the appanage of China, and her people are like the Chinese as Spaniards are like French. Physically alike, but not mentally: for the Koreans, slothful, hap-hazard, vitiated all through, were run to seed. They once had their qualities, no doubt, but I saw them now atrophied; while centuries of misgovernment, wholly ruining the land, had completed this race's abasement.

I saw Korea as a poor and sparsely cropped land. Here and there, about the little shrines, stood a grove of trees.

Save for these, thriftless generations, in search of fuel, had denuded the country of timber and brush, and rapacity, not afforestation, had been the keynote of their rulers. The Korean climate is bleak, and under each miserable little house, for its warming, is built an oven. To feed these ovens, against the coming winter, children were now cutting bundles of grass on every hillside. In Seoul, the capital, and a walled city, Americans had installed waterworks, tramways and electric light. In the North, too, they owned profitable gold mines. These concessions had been given by the Emperor, since becoming a puppet of the Japanese; now it was known that nothing of value would be put past the people of Nippon. The Koreans, from the Emperor downwards, were futility itself; that they were passing under the domination of Japan seemed to me the natural thing.

At the Seoul Club, a glorified bar room with a billiard table, a strange group met together. A bare twenty frequented the place, but one and all, they drank alcohol as I had never seen men drink. And they were good company. There were consuls, well read and witty; Americans, in from the mines for a spree; a couple of journalists awaiting events, who abused the Korean or the Japanese Government according to subsidy; several German retailers, and an English merchant from Chemulpo. There was a Dutch-American Jew; one of the best, he was engineer for the palace dynamo, the only white man allowed within the palace walls, and witness of its intrigues. The Emperor was now a virtual prisoner. Japanese assassins, some years before, had murdered the Empress as she walked by night in her garden, and now he too went in terror. A young Korean nobleman, Ko by name, came to the club. One of three known as trustworthy to the Emperor, he guarded his person in turn;

and as we played billiards together, I knew him, more than once, called by swift messenger away.

If their fate was already upon the Koreans, it lay not far from these rollicking, mad drinkers. A few years later they were mostly dead. Some went suddenly, some in lingering disease; but it was drink took them. When B—— knew his time was come, he sent round Seoul for his friends. Telling them to open champagne, he was lifted from his bed, and pledged them right royally: this within an hour of his death.

When I reached Japan I found she was full. She was indeed chock full and her food producers hard put to it. All over the land the people were in the fields by daylight. Each cultivable foot lay under rice or vegetables; all day long coolies carried out the liquid content of cess-pools, spreading it over the soil, and there was no waste at all; yet the price of food kept rising, and there was a sense of pressure and futility. The Japanese, under some blind instinct, were breeding like rabbits. Their ever-increasing millions demanded food, lands, and outlet; and because these things were not, Japan was become a menace to all the Pacific.

A decrease in the birth-rate, or tremendous wars of expansion lie surely ahead for these people. If their Emperor in his divine wisdom gives the word, they will breed on. If he proclaims caution, and a decrease, they will obey; the birth-rate checks of western civilisation, to this race of imitators, should come easily. The Emperor is still divine in the land, and loyalty to his sacred person a religion; these men, too, have mastered fear: at his absolute disposal lies their life or death. But to one with his ear to the ground come rumblings. Smiling little men still walk the streets of Tokio, but their thoughts are not as of yore. Even as European bowler sits hid-

ously above *kimono*, so Western democracy casts a shadow on the old, blind allegiance. An era of factories, too, has come, with all its horrors, while the commercial people are branded as not to be relied on.

Despite her prowess, ugly internal problems face Japan; but the crisis is not yet. It lies perhaps some decades ahead. Meanwhile, at home and abroad, these people exploit the West. Imitative, not original, they ransack it for knowledge. They suck our brains in science, in medicine, in methods of destruction. Ten thousand notebooks catalogue us in minutest detail. Smiling, and exquisitely polite, Japan goes about her work, awaiting the day when we shall receive final notice to quit.

I speak of the classes, cold and calculating, yet fiercely patriotic, putting Japan always first. For the masses I have a warmer feeling. How willingly 'ricksha pullers and baggage carriers worked for me, sweating, time and again, from every pore; all panting and breathless, their smiles and little obeisances, when you dealt generously with them, were beautiful to see!

And the country-side is often idyllic. There are aspects of it where the overcrowding, the grinding poverty, and the horrors that loom ahead, are forgotten, and one seems to stand in the early morning of the world. The glory of the cherry blossoms cannot be oversung. In the month of March they appear, so massy, so sparkling in the sun, as to call for tears of joy. A thousand shrines of the Shinto religion are placed throughout the land. Always set in a grove, beside running water, giant camellia trees shed on them the petals of a thousand flowers, and Shintoism's nature-worship is made manifest. About many a shrine are set carved gateways, and the old stone lanterns, standing higher than a man; and tame deer, fed at the hands of the pious, often wander in these sacred groves.



There are heavy rains in Japan, and especially, it seemed to me, at night. On such nights, lying in my quilt on the floor of some native inn, I peered fearfully at the roof; so great was the downpour that I looked for the frail structure to collapse. But without these rains, the forests of bamboo and pine had not been so green, nor had myriad streams rippled throughout the year. Famed waterfalls and lakes, too, bless the rains, as do the gorgeous iris tribe, growing in swamp, the wild azaleas covering the northern hillsides, and the sacred forests of cryptomerias surrounding Nikko. Shintoism itself, the very soul of old Japan, springs out of the rains.

Though deep in their hearts Japanese hate white men—hate them for their colour, and their physique, and their contempt—their women do not widely share the feeling. Those women the foreigner is most likely to meet—the keepers of inns, tea-houses, shops, courtesans and the like—he will find mercenary; but as a race they are so adaptable, so willing to please, so dainty, that the final impression is one of charm. Facially, there are two well-marked types in the women. There is the round, jolly, bucolic face—the wench; and the longer and rather aristocratic face, lighting rarely in a smile, which can be very alluring indeed. Japan is blessed in her women.

All over the East, and settled in many spots more remote, there are Japanese prostitutes—tens of thousands of them. For example, Singapore is no squeamish place; this great port and city of lusty Chinamen has its full share. Near the big eating houses, where the streets towards evening are crowded with men, is the prostitutes' quarter. The houses here are three-storied. They are brightly lit, making the streets light as day, and at the doors of each sit six or eight Japanese women. These are clean, nice looking creatures, wearing brilliant *ki-monos*. Their hair, black and glossy, is brushed back

from the forehead, nor are their faces painted as in the *yoshiwaras* of Japan. There must be a thousand Japanese women in the quarter. Many a one is there meritoriously, having sold herself for a term of years to pay a parent's debts. She will return home some day, and take up her old life without losing caste.

In this quarter are many Chinese women, also houses of Indian women, rather attractive creatures, who display themselves hung with jewels; but here, in their own land, you will find but few Malays. The Malay, the most passionate woman of all these, is the most reticent; her kinswoman, the Javanese, on the contrary, is the loosest of the loose.

The most abandoned women here were the Europeans—not British born, who are not allowed here, but Roumanian, Russian and Austrian Jewesses and the like, and at the service of all and sundry. Just as the Japanese woman throughout the East is liable to be slender, cleanly, and well mannered, so this European type tends to fatness, to drink, to slovenliness and, when angered, to a torrent of foul language.

It was dusk when I came to the Cochin China coast. Off a promontory the steamer lay-to, taking aboard a pilot, and where red lights shone in the darkness, passed into the river.

Saigon, capital of France's colony, lies forty miles from the river's mouth, and it was toward midnight when we neared it. At the wharf, where we came to rest, several hundred French stood waiting. They were grouped in a crowd, in the electric light, gazing up at us. The men wore well made white suits; they looked to be jaunty and debonair, and many of them stroked their beards. The women were in evening toilette, some wearing large feather hats. In the background stood carriages and

motors. The whole scene, so unexpected, looked to me quietly elegant, and I thought, "Saigon is full of rich swells."

But it was the electric light! As I looked again the glamour passed. These were not rich swells at all. As to eight out of ten, they were in reality *fonctionnaires*—small ones at that—and the rest kept shop. They were as poor as rats. The womenfolk carried a quarter's salary on their backs; the men were worth just about what they stood up in.

I was drawn in a 'ricksha to the best hotel. Here, too, some disillusion awaited me. At the very first luncheon, a *gigôt de mouton* was served, reeking with garlic. I sent for the manager.

"You call this a good hotel," I said, "and yet you dare use this abomination?"

"*Oui, Monsieur!* It is the *gigôt*. The finest people eat garlic with *gigôt*. His Highness, the Duc de Montpensier, comes here. He enjoys our *cuisine*. He owns half the shares of the hotel."

I replied: "When people own half the shares, they have *got* to enjoy the *cuisine*. Further, I regard his palate with extreme indifference. My food mustn't be prepared with garlic; in the matter of garlic I am uncompromisingly British." And we left it at that.

I found myself in a French town of the South. There was the *place*; across grassy *parterres*, the municipal theatre faced a bandstand, and nearby stood the *Hotel de Ville*. At street corners adjacent, their chairs and tables set out on the pavement, were located half a dozen *cafés*. From the centre of the town radiated well made streets. French houses lined these, and their avenues of tamarinds cast a deep shade. At the top of a rise stood the cathedral. Near it, the palace of the Governor-General. And so one passed to extensive suburbs—well roaded, well

lit, with charming gardens; the whole lying under such avenues of banyan and tamarind trees as not another town can rival.

Round the French Saigon lies a considerable native town, where one moves among the people of the country. These are Annamites—silky little Chinese; graceful creatures, polite and unassertive, who shuffle along rather than stride, and seem casual, quite aimless, and inordinately happy. They are Chinese stock, gone to seed in the tropics, become small and effeminate after many generations. More refined, more subtle than the Chinese, they have neither their physique nor their personality; the real Chinaman, harder and uncouth, remains by far the better man.

The Annamite women seemed less aimless, and of a finer material. I judged them intelligent. Sexually, they are better looking than Chinese women, altogether more graceful. Though breeding freely, they retain a virginal slenderness, and in their little tunics and silk trousers can be most alluring; nor are they prudish. The Frenchmen have taken many mistresses from among them, and a number of wedded wives; but to their credit, things being as they are, seem mostly to marry among their own women, and raise a family.

The natives seem well-to-do: the French yoke is a light one. The lower-class French mix freely with them; and if this has engendered lack of respect for the rulers, it has brought about a certain liking, an asset in its way.

There are natives of India living in Saigon—certainly some thousands—who have come from Pondicherry and Karikal, the French possessions. To the youths of Pondicherry, Saigon must stand for the great metropolis—a spot where fortune should be tempted; and those who come seem to do well. They are Roman Catholics. At the cathedral, once as I passed, there was a Pondicherry

wedding. The guests were in European dress, the bride's father wore white gloves, a priest bowed them to the door, and they drove away in carriages.

You will not see many Chinese in Saigon, but do not think they have overlooked it. They live in Cholon, three miles distant, a town exclusively theirs. Steam tramways connect it with the capital. A canal, too, which carries rice barges to the Chinese mills. Cholon is the country's commercial centre, and the Chinese, as usual, are in control.

Cochin China is a French colony. In the past it cost France much money; but now pays its way, gives employment to some thousands of French officials, and looks settled down to a sort of lethargy. It is a fertile country, and like Burma and Siam a great exporter of rice. Sugar, fruits and vegetable products grow freely. The cattle are inferior. The Annamite horses—that are really ponies—have no stamina. Ducks breed well; but it is the pigs which find ideal environment. While still young, they become immensely fat, and the fame of them, their succulence, is known to Chinamen far and wide. This last year, seventy thousand live pigs were shipped from Saigon to Singapore. In rough weather they readily become seasick. The abandonment of lady's maids on the Calais boat can be a horrible sight; yet it is as nothing to the abandonment of a cargo of fat pigs, running into the monsoon.

The French have given the colony superb roads and bridges. Schools, lighting, posts and telegraphs, police and the like, are all they should be. Everywhere they planted avenues of trees, which have now come to glorious maturity. And there they have stopped. French Saigon is already old-fashioned, and half dead. After the slight morning stir, offices and shops close up, and during the heat of the day the town sleeps beneath its



trees. At four o'clock there is a little life again. Soon the *cafés* fill, and from 5 to 7:30, the absinthe hour, they are crowded. There is now a breath of animation about, motor cars and carriages come and go, and one hears the strains of several small orchestras. By eight o'clock the people have left for their homes by 'ricksha, and the town is again dead.

And so the days pass. These people have no energy and less initiative. They cut no figure in their own colony. Of all the big rice mills at Cholon, several were German, and the rest Chinese. No mill was French, nor had any Frenchman a stake in the country's main industry. A French Company, in Paris, owns the river steamers, but the trade they carry up and down is seldom French. In Saigon there are dozens of Frenchmen who will shave you, who will sell you wine, or scent, or neckties, or slices of cooked ham; but there is not a man in the place who can handle the big things. It is a colony of retailers. Their clients are the hundreds of small officials. The lives of all are petty and routinal; and if they came to China for romance, they have surely failed to find it.

A day's steam up Mekong River, one crosses Cochin China's boundary, and enters Cambodia. Presently you come to its capital—Pnom-Penh—upon a high bank. The towers and temples of the King's palace are visible over the trees. Pnom-Penh revolves around the palace. The king, now seventy-five years old, is credited with several hundred wives. These maintain a strict seclusion; but for honoured guests his dancing girls are ordered out, to the number of one hundred and fifty, who, sewn up in their scales of gold, contort and posture to the strains of barbaric music.

By Pnom-Penh the Mekong branches; and following a tributary west, you come to an extensive lake. In the

dry season of the year this empties, providing the natives with a vast catch of fish; but this was still the time of the rains, and the lake looked to be many miles across. I was aboard a small river steamer, and as we sailed the lake at night, a light waved upon the water. We stopped. After some minutes a boat stole alongside, and in the darkness, in dead silence, four Buddhist priests stepped aboard. They were wrapped in their yellow robes. Without a sound, they took their place with the deck travellers, spread their mats, and lay down to sleep. Then we went on our way.

In the morning, near the head of the lake, I entered a canoe, was poled up a creek, transferred thence to a cart with trotting bullocks, and by midday had come to one of the greatest sights of the world.

This was Angkor—the temple, the palace, and the imperial remains of a Hindu dynasty: of a dynasty a thousand years old, planted by adventurers in a strange land, and flourishing greatly; but long since swept from knowledge, leaving no vestige of script, but only these stone memorials, and that Indian cast in the faces of the people.

Here was a vast Hindu fane in Cambodia. Let those who have seen Madura, rest the mind's eye upon its temple. Take that temple, that greyish mass of the quintessence of Hinduism, and raise it architecturally to the *n*th power; set it very high, led up to by imperial flights of steps; surround it with towers, terraces and galleries, and terraces again; far below, set out long, stately causeways, an enclosure a mile in length, high and richly embellished outer walls, and dig an encircling moat of two hundred paces. Finally, set a great forest all around—a tropical forest that surges, that leaps the moat, that bursts through the walls—and Angkor Wat, the temple, stands before you!

Angkor Thom—the palace—is distant some miles through the forest. On its grey walls, upon endless friezes, cohorts go marching to battle, elephants and spearmen meet in Homeric struggle, dancers, casting the lotus leaf, sway lithely before victors, and a hundred Brahmas, carved upon turret and dome, gaze placidly down. At Angkor Thom, a bijou beside the greater pile, there is joy for an archæologist's lifetime; but it was Angkor Wat, rising high over the forest trees, that I returned to again and again. How the great stones fitted! Where had cement been in a thousand years? Yet these lay stone upon stone, groove against groove for eternity. Everywhere the sacred snake reared its seven heads. Everywhere the holy trinity—Brahma, Vishnu, Shiva, and their myriad manifestations—revealed their mystic history upon the walls. In the highest chamber of all—an interpolation, 'as it were,' of the Cambodians—sat a golden Buddha. Before him, silent and contemplative, knelt the four priests of the lake. On the wall, behind his golden halo, there seemed to hang a draping of rich black velvet; it was a cluster of some hundreds of sleeping bats.

In the epic of the Chinese—the steerage and deck passengers—I had forgotten about those in the saloon. Another race of men, this last hundred years, has been doing things in the Far East. I sailed from Cochin China to Java—a week's voyage. The steamer was a Norwegian tramp, carrying rice. Her officers were Norwegians, her crew Chinese, we were piloted out by a Frenchman, received at the other end by a Dutchman; and the common tongue to them all was the King's English.

A thing like that does not come about fortuitous; and thus we see, once again, that Stamford Raffles well knew what he was at. He laid for us the surest foundation.

When he came home from the East, he lived in London, and there founded the Zoological Gardens. He died at the age of forty-six, and lies buried in a vault in Hendon Parish Church.

## CHAPTER XVII

### THE ARCHIPELAGO

To lie in the Singapore Roads, and look out upon the world, is my great delight. All around, and as far as the eye can reach, rise islands, mountainous and forest-clad, broken off fragments as it were of Sumatra. Singapore, an island itself, hangs a pendant to Malaya, whose outline can be seen yonder. Never were such Roads. Bounded here by the city front, here by the wooded isles, there are steamers anchored in them to-night from every sea. Hundreds of Chinese junks, moored in clusters, hug the shore. They have brought in rice from Siam, timber from Kelantan, tapioca from Johore, kerosene from Sumatra, pigs from Cochin China, dried fish from Cambodia; I have seen them sail in with a cargo of jack-fruit or durians, or loaded with pineapples for the Singapore cannery. Eastward of this native shipping, the water shallows, and here, out upon piles, many seafaring Chinese have built their homes. Beyond this is no more water, but a great mangrove swamp, and then one enters a forest of cocoanuts.

On a day that I took note of, thirty steamers carried the mails out of Singapore. They were bound for every port in the Far East, for every island in the Archipelago; and as they disappeared, one by one, my thoughts travelled delectably with them.

This one sailed to the Malay States— to Selangor and Perak. That was a territory I knew well; I had but to



close my eyes, and it lay spread before me. . . . Tropic forests, dripping and steaming after rain; forest clearings, mile after mile, where young rubber trees wave; vast gravel pits—mines of alluvial tin, whence the coolies stagger up with their loads; fine roads, railways, prosperous British planters, a great inflow of Chinese traders and labour: the whole under a burning sun—that is Malaya. The Malays, dwellers in this land, are of the Peoples of the Afternoon. Aristocrats, sedately polite, their pleasing exterior covers lack of racial personality—of any national will. Breeding freely, they will not suffer extinction; but already the rush of the new era passes them by. Malaya is opening up fast, making British and Chinese wealthy: but where are the Malays? What has rubber meant to them? What has tin meant? In general terms they have meant nothing at all. Money! Strenuous toil! Set a Malay behind a trotting pony—one of those mincing little stallions from Sumatra or Bali; put up a couple of good cocks, fighting for a purse; hint at a scrap down the river, a trouble over a woman, where some blood may flow—and you may keep your rubber and tin!

The Malay looks an Arab with a touch of the Chinaman. Mahomedan by religion, he is not a fanatic, and while hard to drive, is always easily led. He is a remote sort of being, yet somehow sympathetic, and I think partial to us. We may make something of his race in the time to come; and at least we—that is, the Chinese and we—are making much of his country.

This boat is sailing for Rangoon. Soon after she enters the Irrawaddy, that city will come in view, and she will drop anchor off it in the stream. Upon the banks, sweating coolies shoulder the rice sacks, and trained elephants roll the logs of teak; these being the staples of

Burma's export. And two miles back from the river, a dinner-bell rests on a table. It is Shwe Dagon, the Buddhist temple, a dinner-bell of shining gold, set among old trees, its golden handle rising three hundred feet into the sky. About it, on its great platform, are small temples and shrines and golden pagodas—some hundreds of them—and many Buddhas. There are the eating booths, and the sellers of food; candles and incense are burned to the gods; flowers laid at their feet; shaven priests come to chant, and upon the strokes of a gong all the people prostrate themselves.

In this considerable city dwell its own people, the Burmese, and a like number of the people of India; but the Chinese there have the personality. Rangoon is becoming Chinese, and the race is permeating Burma. They have come to stay; many have married Burmese women, producing half-castes of a fine physical type.

Here, too, in the Burmese, is a People of the Afternoon. I see them in sadder plight than the Malays. They lie between the millstones. Hindu and Chinaman have met face to face in Burma. All unknowing, they already wage a duel for supremacy, and the Burmese—the country's people—go quietly to the wall. But they are very happy, as yet hardly feeling the pinch. Gentle and philosophic, they draw their gay silks round them, light their cheroots, and drift lazily down stream. From so spineless a people a national regeneration can hardly come. If it did, it would come through the women, who, however lax in their loves, are both competent and vital.

This boat sails for Siam. She, too, on the third day, will pass up a river to a great city. The city is Bangkok, lying beneath old trees; canals and waterways penetrate it, and above the trees pagodas rise, and the roofs of temples.

At the twilight, when Bangkok was bathed in violet, I used to lie drifting in a boat. So umbrageous was she; such flamboyants in bloom; such emerald tamarinds; and about the pagodas and the temples such stately groves! There would come the screech of a syren from the shipping clustered in midstream; the distant cries of hucksters; a solemn gong would sound from a temple. Then the night would fall like a thunderbolt.

This country is Burma over again. As in Burma, rice is the staple, and Bangkok, as place of export, second only to Rangoon. There are the same forests; and the teak, as in Burma, greatly exported. The people might be Burmese—almost. Just the least extra tilt of the eyes has come in. Their dress is similar; but the Siamese, men and women, clip their hair, brushing it straight back from the forehead. They, too, are a very happy people. Lazier than the Burmese, even more spineless, they will drift quietly down the stream. The Chinese are here! Bangkok's energy, all her retail trade, belongs to them; it is only a matter of time, and Siam will be swallowed with the rest. Siam has a King. His father, before him, was a great man in his way, who held his country together. He was a Buddhist like his people. A King of Siam is expected to marry his own sister, while his wives and concubines are numbered by hundreds. The new King is only half Buddhist; the other half is Christian. We may therefore be sure his women are reduced by fifty per cent. He was educated in Europe; sent to Oxford and Sandhurst; is rather a charming person they say—more a dilettante than a King. Under him Siam is like to be retrograde. The immense royal family—graceful little men in silks, and black velvet breeches—have descended on it in swarms. They batten on the treasury; hold every high post; rush about in motor cars;

build palaces in the suburbs; are altogether inefficient, and are paving the way for eventualities.

I am still lying in the Singapore Roads. All these islands I see stretching away east, belong to the Dutch; the Archipelago is theirs for two thousand miles.

These Dutch Indies are a splendid heritage. Large and small, they number many hundreds of islands, on either side the Equator; and if hot, and mostly unhealthy, are rich and diverse. To their surface riches are added oilfields; while such dense vegetation, such a belt of forests and mountains, is found in no other sea.

There are critics of the Dutch. They say that, excepting Java, the islands lack development, their riches are hardly scratched, the laws tend to frighten away, there is a deal of corruption about, and the half-castes run the government.

I have been about these islands, and I do not endorse the critics. One sees shortcomings—in what country are they lacking?—but that the Dutch government of them, on the whole, makes for righteousness, is evident to the unbiased mind.

Development, outside Java, *does* lag behind. Borneo, Sumatra and Celebes are rich countries, crying their richness, yet the Dutch leave them barely touched. It is not Saigon over again, and the petty retailers. There are industrial Hollanders out here, men of energy and initiative; but they are doing well in Java, and keep to their lay. Moreover, the policy may be right. The world can be over-developed—is being so. Too much can be crowded into our day. Too many of nature's resources skimmed for their cream. These countries will keep, and the Dutchmen of three or four generations hence have their innings.

As to the question of the half-castes—well, there they

are! Java is certainly full of them. The officialdom of outlying islands is even more thickly touched. It is a paradox that a man of Utrecht or Haarlem, who will only cross tulips on approved, scientific lines, will go out to the Indies, deliberately marry a Javanese, and let merry hell loose in the shape of a large, piebald family.

The Dutch make the best of a bad job. Seeing that these people are there, and fast increasing, they take them into society, into the schools, into the government, and in fact place but few disabilities in their way. The half-castes rank as nearly with whites as may be. It is even said that when olive-skinned youths go from the Indies to Holland, they work a havoc among the plump northern blondes.

Java is one of the most densely populated islands in the world. It supports thirty million natives, the most industrious section of the Malay race, whose tillage is the last word in tropical culture. The other islands are less populous. On Sumatra there is always a scarcity of labour, and the Javanese do not go there readily. On some of the tobacco plantations they employ coolies from British India; in the Deli district of Sumatra, I saw some thousands permanently settled. The natives, wherever they be, are mostly variants of the Malay stock, and the Malay tongue is understood all over the Archipelago. Despite a heavy landing tax, the Chinese are found everywhere. The bulk of the trade, wholesale or retail, is always in their hands. They readily adapt themselves, wear the *sarong*, do not shy at the *reistafel*, chatter in Malay or High Dutch, and often marry a woman of the country. The blended progeny, as one noted in Burma, is quite a sound type.

Physically, the face of the Archipelago is one of tropical forest. Wooded mountain chains traverse most of the islands, and on Java are many active volcanoes. There



are innumerable rivers. No lands in the world have so many, no other race of men seems so adapted to river life. River or creek, they are all tidal; the waters rush in or out, almost as if in spate, and the skilful river folk, heading their canoes, go up or down with the tide. Mostly the forest and the mangrove swamp line their banks; but many an enchanting glade, a rice field, a banana planting, a cocoanut wood, or a village beneath its trees will come to sight. They teem with fish, and all Malays are skilful casters of the net. In half an hour a man will take in the family's food for that day, and I have watched an ancient woman, with a mere hand sieve, keep the village in white-bait.

In these islands, many a home is built over a river, and nearly all the natives' huts are set upon piles. Flimsy as they look, they are a snug shelter from the torrential rains, where the family, chatting happily, chewing the eternal betel in unison, retire until the sun shines. With their fish, their fowls, their rice, their fruits, they never go empty in these islands. A cheroot is always at hand, a canoe is tethered by the bank, a pony stands in the stall; there is no hard work to speak of, no real care, plenty of happy talk, and a good-looking woman to tend the house. There is no religion here—just the merest lip service; but the Allah of these Archipelago Mahomedans is surely beneficent.

I dallied once in Sourabaya, Java's busiest town. In the mornings, rising about six, I set about the day's exercise—an hour's swinging walk. I passed beneath such avenues of trees as the Equator loveth, and their freshness after the night's rain, all shot with glamour from the rising sun, set my feet leaping for joy. Where a vista opened, one could see to the uplands of the interior. From out these rose a mountain mass, faint and blue, where, in days gone by, I had peered into the smoking Bromo; but

already the mists gathered which would hide it till another dawn.

The working day opened early, and from all the umbrageous suburbs, ere seven o'clock had struck, humanity came streaming. Flights of school children led the van. Riding bicycles, driving behind ponies, more rarely walking, and all in their starched white clothes, they looked extraordinarily fresh and clean. Fair young Hollanders rode by, and Javanese and Chinese youths of the better class—but as to the great majority—boys and girls—these Sourabaya suburbs were the homes of the Dutch half-castes.

The bicycle stream now carried in its young persons—typists, shop girls, clerks, and the like—clean as clean could be, yet dusty. Many of them were handsome, altogether better looking than the whites; yet at twenty-five or thirty their brains would be dried up, their faces faded, their figures gone, and their femininity become bankrupt.

Then came the heads. Under the trees they came, by carriage and car, in a stream that lasted an hour. Here one saw a leavening—almost a preponderance—of the big, loosely built Dutch of Holland, and their big, loosely built wives often sat by their side. A carload of Javanese grandees would rush hooting by, but the finest motor cars that ran into Sourabaya town belonged to the Chinese. They swept down the road in a long procession, and hundreds of white-coated, intelligent-looking, and doubtless wealthy celestials, were carried to their business. In the evenings these same Chinamen drove out with their families. Flowery little women in bright silks, with the flossiest of black hair, sat proudly by their side, and a young family of six or eight gazed keenly out upon the wayfaring life of the East.

And then I travelled to Macassar, on Celebes island, at two days' steaming from Java. Some twelve tiny

islands, lying in half-circles, dot the blue waters of the harbour; but these are far out, affording no real shelter, and the long wharf of Macassar, where ten steamers lay, faced an open sea.

This was a wonderful wharf. Much copra lay piled upon it; stacks of ebony and rattan and fibre; vast forest logs; ground nuts; and all the tougher products of these seas; while the incoming steamers discharged upon it iron work and machinery, crockery, glass, cotton goods, liquor and the luxuries of the West. Several thousand natives, in thin but gaudy attire, carried the shifting cargoes to and fro.

Behind it was the low-lying town; of no great area, but compact, crowded, a busy spot, the meeting place of Eastern races. Here many Javanese are settled. Here, it need hardly be said, are Chinese by the thousand. The retail importance of the place is vouched for by the number of Bombay Mahomedans, and by many of a still astuter tribe—the Arab. The Arab of Arabia has spread throughout the Malay countries, where the commercial simplicity of the native, and the Mahomedan atmosphere, are alike agreeable factors; but nowhere do you see him congregated by the hundreds as in Macassar. Then there are the races of Celebes itself. These grade from pure Malay, to ruder and more rugged strain; and at the bottom of the scale one saw here and there wild and frizzy-headed men, as it were straight from New Guinea. Just one or two of these I sighted in the crowd, yet that gave me the key to Macassar. It is the last centre in Asia. It is the cleavage point, where the Far East veers to the South Seas.

Over against Celebes lies Borneo, and I found myself in the Dutch region there, sailing up the river Barito. This was wide and deep; but so dense were the mangrove

swamps, so forbidding the low, uncleared forest, so barren the land of all human life, that I thought these reaches had never been sailed before. As it grew to the dusk, a thunderstorm broke, the rain fell in a sheet, and we dropped anchor for the night. At dawn it was still lowering. The mists lay reeking over the forest, and I thought I was come to the land accurst; but with the hauling up of the anchor, and the sunrise, the mists were lifted too.

We came at once to a tributary. Its mouth was some sixty yards wide, not readily discerned among the trees; but the steamer, forsaking the great river, headed for it, and passed up at half speed. Nowhere, perhaps, does so large a vessel (she was 1700 tons) breast so narrow a stream, and with the captain's permission I stood with him on the bridge. As we steamed on, some canoes appeared. We carried a big wash with us, and an old Malay, paddling alone, was caught in it and capsized. For a moment the captain turned his head, shouting if all was well; and that moment the native steersman, looking neither to right nor to left, ran us aground. Gazing up, I saw the branches of trees over my head, and with a squelching, almost luscious movement, we had penetrated ten feet into Borneo. The steamer shook slightly, steadied herself for a matter of five seconds, and with a sort of sigh slid back into the water. In two minutes the incident was over, and we were again under way. A large V-shaped incision gaped upon the bank, and the old Malay was standing in his canoe, shaking himself dry.

Presently, where the river widened out, we came to a wharf, and our vessel being turned in the stream, with not ten feet of clear, tied up alongside. This was Bandjermasin, a town lying along the river for four miles, the largest in Borneo.

I explored all the country around. Roads had been laid on the soft clay; but for one who walked them, ten

travelled by canoe along the waterways. These penetrated the forest everywhere, and ranged from twenty yards wide to channels of four and five feet. The merest runnels sufficed for highways, and often upon my walks, thinking no water near, came canoes to me stealing through the undergrowth. The main streams round the town carried a great traffic; each Malay, each Chinaman, went about his business in a canoe; bales of merchandise, loads of fruit and produce, passed up and down in boats; itinerant vendors made the water their stance, and there were moving lights, cries, and the sounds of passing oars far into the night. Bangkok has been called the "Venice of the East," but the title belongs to Bandjermasin; the very canoes of the well-to-do—black as ebony, carven, and swanlike in the prow—are gondolas to the life.

Never was so straggling a town. Four miles along this river, two miles along that, two along this other, the little wooden houses in their compounds line the banks, and a hundred yards back of them stands the uncleared forest. Lying in my boat, I wondered where the forests ceased—if they ever ceased—and I speculated on some open and smiling hinterland. Just then a canoe shot past me, coming out of the interior. The paddler, an old woman, sat in it alone, and in front of her were piled two thousand ducks' eggs. Ere I had ceased to wonder at this, came another canoe. Another old woman was bringing down two thousand ducks' eggs, and Borneo became to me like the king's daughter—all glorious within.

In the river Barito, an hour's paddling from Bandjermasin, there is an island colony of monkeys. I had been told: "Don't go there of an afternoon, they will be asleep"; but when I arrived towards three o'clock, with some bunches of bananas, the trees became alive with leaping, and over sixty presented themselves. In their eagerness for the fruit, several swam out to the canoe; but



the rage of the colony, when my boatman took one captive, was frightful. That day, along the river banks of the town, every young Malay and Chinaman seemed to be flying a kite. They were all of a purple tint; as we returned from the monkey colony, hundreds were soaring in the sky.

Thirty miles from Bandjermasin is the district of Martapoera, where I travelled by road. Passing now through cleared land, now through the forests, the jungle seemed to be closing in, and I thought we were at the end of the world. And then it opened again, and we were at a river's bank, where bamboos, the sago palm, bananas and cocoanuts grew, and the huts were numerous. Presently appeared a great building, with a galvanised roof, and issuing from it the sounds of running machinery.

I entered, and found a large works; revolving shaft and countershaft spread over half an acre. Four hundred men sat there, in serried rows, before up-to-date machinery; and of all strange things in the world, they were cutting diamonds! More than that. In the great heat, squatted to their work, they wore only a loin cloth, and to this extent the scene was local; but these Malays of the Equator, these wild men of Borneo, plucked from their forests, were become mild and bald and spectacled like any European, and pot-bellied from physical inaction, and they set the facets to the whirring discs, and peered at them through their glasses with all the mannerisms of Amsterdam. It appears that not far from Martapoera lies an extensive alluvial diamond field. All the stones found there are sold to a syndicate, who own these cutting works. The diamonds are not of the finest water; but as the Malays, and especially the Chinese, are avid for the cut stones, they find a ready market. Like the diamond syndicate in London, the Borneo syndicate has a monopoly, and is able to regulate the price to the market.

The London syndicate is composed of wealthy Jews. The Borneo syndicate is made up of wealthy Arabs—astutest of all the world's traders. These diamond buyers of Borneo come direct from the Hadramaut of Arabia, put in thirty years' work, pass their interest on to a son, and return to the Hadramaut to die. They carry back a fortune; and no doubt think of Kimberley, beside Martapoera, as very small beer.

Eastward in the Archipelago, the most considerable island is Timor. It is owned in part by the Dutch, in part by the Portuguese, and I landed at Dilly, the small settlement of the Portuguese. Here the Malay type has much deteriorated, and more than a strain of the New Guinea negrito has crept in. The place lay shaded under old trees, the wooded mountains rising a mile back from the shore. On grassy stretches outside Dilly, a large number of ponies grazed, the most noted product of Timor. A fine coffee is grown too; but the island is among the least fertile in these seas.

New Guinea, the largest of all islands, shuts in, as it were, the Malay Archipelago on the eastern end; beyond it lies the South Seas. Yet New Guinea is neither of the Archipelago nor of the South Seas. A mere channel separates it from Australia, and the face of Papua, or British New Guinea, is very much the face of North Queensland. As I rode inland, I passed through a dried-up gum scrub; wallabies fled at my approach, and white cockatoos rose, to screech and circle in mid-air. In so vast an equatorial land, nature cannot be denied, and across great expanses of the island stretch unsurpassed tropical forests; while orchids hang heavy from the boughs, birds of paradise hover, butterflies near a foot in span flash their sheen, and one sees much that is gorgeous and exotic.

The people of New Guinea rank far below the races of the East. They are not a pure blooded folk; one can see the Malay in them, and the Polynesian; there are semitic faces, with noses out-Heroding Herod's; and where the trading Chinese have coasted, there they have left their mark. Mostly, those I saw were of negrito cast, insignificant, and not physically fine; while the women's looks do not recommend them.

The tribes are without number. Each has its dialect too, often its own language. A dialect may be spoken only in a single village, and in one small district ten languages may flourish. The tribesman's world is the tribe. Despite the teaching of the missionaries, and the chastening presence of the village policeman, he is given to spying out aliens from the tree tops; and when he has spied one, he likes to shoot him with an arrow. If he belongs to a cannibal tribe, and the coast is clear, he may then eat him; not for relish of human flesh, but to inherit the dead man's strength and virtues.

But even among these people, life has its relaxations, and there are whole days—indeed, far longer periods—given over to dancing, feasting and merriment. I recall an afternoon's walk to a village upon the shore. The huts stood upon piles; when the tide was in, some feet of water lay beneath them, and nearby were tethered the outrigger canoes. Upon the beach there stood a framework, hung with leaves, and one thought it might screen the people at their toilette; but the leaves were the sheathing of hundreds of bunches of bananas which hung there, and I supposed the season's crop newly gathered in. Up beyond the beach grew a grove of cocoanuts.

On this afternoon a great dance was in progress. Canoes from all about the bay had come in, and merry-makers from other villages, and I counted six hundred on the beach. Physically they were a poorish lot, and

half of them covered with a mangle. The bucks, in clean loin cloths, their noses and ears spiked with wooden ornaments, their arms tightly held in bands of plaited grass, carried sticks and spears. In the manner of Fiji, they had frizzed out their hair; but the style of Fiji, let alone the physique, was markedly lacking, the Fijian being the most debonair person in the South Seas. Their real splendour, and the pride of the dance, were the head-dresses—fan-shaped, three feet high, three feet across, treasured heirlooms in each dancer's family—in which one detected the plumage of the cassowary, of the crested pigeon, and of birds of paradise.

Now the drums beat. They are lengths of hollowed trunks, covered at one end with the skin of the iguana, open at the other, and tapped with the fingers. This was for a dance; but there is a different beat for a birth, and a death, and a battle; and for a human sacrifice, when the oven is heated to redness, and the disembowelling bamboo is ready to be plunged in, they can be dreadfully alarming. To-day they beat placidly, reassuringly, and the dancers took their places.

They moved forward in a phalanx, very slowly, the plumes waving, the dance being of rhythm more than of movement; then they turned about, and came back again. There was a rest. The drums beat again, and the same slow movement was gone through. Then, from out the crowd of children, and dogs, and pigs, and old folk, the young women came forward, joining the dancing bucks, linking up arm and arm with them under the waving head-dresses. As the drums quickened, the dancers now advanced, now retired, chasseeing now here, now there, the second couple taking the place of the first, and so on; despite the sedateness of the measure, and the uttermost social remoteness of those who danced, it had become a Papuan Sir Roger de Coverley.

## CHAPTER XVIII

### THE SOUTH SEAS

FAR away in the South Pacific, I am standing beside a lake. The early winter's darkness has fallen, and in the blur I can but just see the lonely uplands which rise around, and the outer encircling hills, crowned with their primæval bush; the air, too, in these moments has become chill.

All about me at this end of the lake—up through the sands of the shore, from crevices in the rocks, from out the thick scrub—wisps and columns of steam are rising. If your peer closer you will see, here a pool of boiling water, here a hole of boiling, bubbling mud, here again an incipient geyser, vomiting water, then steam, with rhythmic precision; the air is sulphurous, the place an inferno.

A mile distant from the lake, these boilings and geysers break out again, and here is perched a Maori village. Its sturdy but feckless people, home from their sweet-potato patches, from galloping their horses aimlessly, or from a visit to the nearby township of the whites, make ready the evening meal; their cooking pots stand in the boiling waters.

Maoris have dwelt in this region for hundreds of years. In the darkness, as the water and the mud bubble, and the steam clouds rise to the stars, the old folk will recite their annals for you. Their brains are stored with Maori lore; should you prove sympathetic, you will hear a tribal history which runs back over twenty generations, and begins with their coming here from distant tropical islands.



My vessel has arrived, and cast anchor before the dawn, at Raratonga, a famous island in these seas, with a history.

Polynesians of old were daring, experienced seamen. Probably a thousand years ago they explored the Pacific, and their settlements existed so far apart as Fiji, Hawaii, and Pito-te-henua (Easter Island). Raratonga was settled, and overwhelming tradition makes this the island whence canoes often set out on the voyage of sixteen hundred miles to New Zealand. Storms sweep the seas, and many canoes must have foundered; but a number reached New Zealand, and Maori tribes to this day bear the names of canoes which carried them thither. There is the Takitumu tribe, named after a canoe which journeyed from Raratonga twice. Tradition is strong that a "fleet" of canoes reached New Zealand about the year 1350, carrying persons of quality; and the best Maori families trace back to this event, as our own do to the landing of the Normans.

After this, these redoubtable journeyings about the Pacific seem to have ended. Voyages were confined between the islands of adjacent groups, and outlying settlements of the Polynesian race became isolated. Up to the arrival of Captain Cook in New Zealand and Hawaii, no canoe had reached those islands for hundreds of years.

It is now the dawn at Raratonga. An island some six miles long is revealed, mountainous, its serrated profile rising several thousand feet—the whole covered with dense forest. As the sun comes up, each tree takes on its own shade of green in the forest, the candlenut only standing out in a silvery relief—a right beautiful spot.

Presently I am ashore. A road runs round the coast, and for a mile or more, in the clearings beside it, stand the houses of the settlement. Cocoanuts, mangoes and the like cast a shade over them; flowering shrubs and

creepers give a colouring. Among these is the hybiscus, in many varieties, flowering as I have never yet seen it; I am to know it as the peerless blossom throughout these islands.

The natives go leisurely about their work; they smile as they give you good-day. Here is the home of a missionary. Over there is that of another. The first is a Congregationalist. The second a Latter Day Saint. The Church of England people and the Catholics are not far away. Raratonga has been one of *the* mission centres. By the roadside, all round the island, under the stately *utu* trees, are the graves of the dead. These may lie singly, or in groups up to ten or twelve, and many are in the gardens, under the very eaves of the dwellings. They are extraordinarily florid graves, overlaid with cemented cairn or rectangle, often shaded from the weather by a galvanized roofing, while subsidiary tablets set forth the lengthy names and virtues of the deceased. Over several were erected the verisimilitude of a small house, with curtained windows, and upon others lay odds and ends of property, or a little food. Clearly, in their cast of thought, the Raratongans loved to dwell upon death, with its concomitants; and I could understand how the famous missionary Williams, when he came here in 1821, found the island, theologically speaking, dropped into his mouth like a ripe pear.

Not only did Raratonga welcome the missionaries; in a few years she began to train and send forth her own. Just as the Jesuits of Goa, at an earlier day, had carried Christianity to Malacca and China and Paraquay, so the men of this forest-clad little island helped to carry it to Samoa, Fiji, the New Hebrides and distant New Guinea. But these days of fine fervour have passed. Reaction has set in, and the people, secure in their Christian reputation, yield now the mere outward observances. The

stream of teachers and missionaries begins to run dry. The island is now in touch with the outer world. Everyone rides a bicycle, and the "pictures" have arrived. They are exhibited in the settlement each Saturday evening; and the Sunday's collections have fallen away.

Six hundred miles north by east from Raratonga lie the Society Islands. As you approach these, two mountain masses rise from out the sea: to the left Moorea, to the right, twelve miles distant, Tahiti, the largest of the group. Heading thither, passing through a narrow channel in the reef, you enter the lagoon of Papeete.

You land upon the beloved island of Captain Cook. In the year 1769, when Otaheite was but a name, he was sent here to observe the Transit of Venus, staying many months. In later years, when he had become the master spirit in the Pacific, the discoverer of hundreds of islands, he returned here for food and water and rest again and again.

The town of Papeete lies shaded beneath the trees. From a flagstaff the French *tricolor* is flying. Officials and traders, in their white suits, are to be seen, and about the saloons and eating houses, or parading the streets, a number of half-castes and natives. Many of the latter salute you politely. They wear a garland round their straw hats, or a single blossom behind the ear; this will be frangipani, or hybiscus, and you observe the foliage embowering each little wooden house is of such as these. There are many Chinamen about. They seem to own most of the shops, to control the stalls in the market, and to do all the hard work. I see them shoeing horses at a forge, and learn that a dozen of them keep motor cars for hire. These Cantonese are breeding with the Tahitian women. They are the fathers of half the children on the island, and the sturdier and better looking half at that;

while the Tahitians themselves, like all the other islanders, slowly die out.

Close in behind the town the mountains rise. There is no cultivation upon these slopes, which are green with fern and scrub, but not with forest as at Raratonga. They rise, tapering in waves, to five or six thousand feet, but where the great central peak should be, there is no peak, but a gaping void; some volcano has disembowelled Tahiti. The island is forty miles long, and down its slopes many streams of sweet water flow. Its fifteen thousand natives live upon and cultivate the narrow, fertile strip between the mountains and the sea; and upon this strip, and the fish of the sea, they live bounteously.

In the lagoon of Papeete a dozen island schooners lie. This is the central point of the Eastern Pacific, and having traded in the Societies, the Paumotus, the Marquesas, and the other groups for a thousand miles round, they have brought in their copra and their shell for shipment by the monthly steamer to San Francisco. They will return to the islands with trade goods, and kerosene, carrying sweet potatoes to the atolls, where no food grows save the cocoanut. The lagoon lies dead calm. A mile out the surf is breaking on the reef. Inside the reef, round the point of the bay, comes sailing a boat, gasoline driven, loaded with plantains and oranges, for to-morrow's market. A dozen men and women are aboard. They have come from the village of Tautira, at the far end of the island, where Stevenson once lived, sailing past Taravao, where the girl Tehura was given to Gauguin, and Papeenoo, and the leper village, and Point Venus, where there is a memorial to Captain Cook; and as their journey ends, in strange rhythm, but sweetly, they are singing a song. Beside the lagoon, as I walk, stands a woman wailing bitterly. Her man is dead, she sobs, and she points to a boat even now sailing through the channel in the reef.



It carries the body over to Moorea, behind whose mountains the sun is setting in splendour.

When it is dark, canoes cross the lagoon to the fishing grounds, inside the reef, where presently a number of bobbing lights appear; these attract the fish to them, where the fishers wait with poised spears. Saturday is a big fishing night, Sunday's market being the market of the week. This opens before five in the morning, in the darkness, when you may see the Chinamen standing before their fresh pork and their vegetables, and the fishermen, straight from the reef, with strings of strange-looking fish. On my way back from Sunday's market, at six o'clock, I used to see the Catholics entering their church. The island had been apportioned between these and the French protestants; but in Papeete itself the two American sects of the Mormons, hating each other with bitter hate, but loving all others, now carried on propaganda. They are extraordinary, these Mormons—crude, unkempt, strongly determined, denying themselves even tea and coffee, facing often great hardships. A Mormon woman told me how, in a space of eight feet by six, aboard a schooner, whites and blacks had lain across one another for days, in an ecstasy of retching, praying for the end of the world.

The end of the world! The Seventh Day Adventists, another sect, passing from island to island, have announced it for this generation. As I sailed from Moorea to Tahiti, one of their missionaries engaged me in talk. He read me prophecies from the book of Daniel, and deduced from them the imminence of the Second Coming. *He guaranteed it.* He implored me to keep Saturday as the Lord's Day. If I did so, I was not to see death, but would be caught up with a multitude to heaven.

Wandering round Tahiti, I became the guest of a headman, or chief, near the far end of the island, staying



with him two weeks. His wooden house stood by the sea. Each dawn, the twittering of hundreds of minahs in the breadfruit trees roused me, and I went out. The main mass of Tahiti lay across a bay, utterly soft and blue in the dawn, no vestige of rainclouds yet resting on her. A breeze stirred in the cocoanuts. I saw that about each tree, a few feet from the ground, a band of zinc was bound—a foil to the island's bold and voracious rats. Now would be heard the blowing of a melancholy conch, and the local Chinese baker drove up with horse and cart, leaving four long rolls of French-patterned bread. With this, coffee was presently served me, grown nearby, and extremely fine, together with the milk of cocoanuts, and sugar from an island estate. The chief and I ate on the verandah, his childless wife, and half dozen adopted children, eating under a thatched shelter adjacent. For dinner and supper there was fish and fowl, or perhaps a sucking pig, floating in grease and garlic that turned one's stomach, flanked with taro and plantain and sweet potato—dry and tasteless things; but what with a pawpaw or avocado pear, the Chinaman's bread, and a bowl of coffee, I did none too badly. As we ate, the chief, speaking a little French, plied me with questions about the great world. "Was it true Martinique was more beautiful than Tahiti? But surely the serpents there made life dangerous? Was not Alaska chock full of salmon? Were there very large plantations in Europe? Were not diamonds mined in the earth, and how much did cutting reduce them in size? And did I often visit the King of England?" After breakfast he worked in his vanilla patch, or took me in his canoe fishing. He set his nets upon the coral, inside the reef, in a depth of perhaps six feet. Gazing down here, I saw red fish, green fish with noses like parrots, black fish, fish striped like zebras, and schools of minnows bluer than the imaginings of any

Reckitt; and when the catch was good, and they struggled together in the end of the net, the water flashed like an expanse of opal. We also went fishing for *varo*—the sea centipede. In shallow water, where the bottom was clay, you saw the hole, two or three inches wide; into which you lowered a baited nest of hooks, flicked the water to attract the *varo's* attention, and waited. Presently there came a tug, a subterranean struggle, and you slowly pulled out, nearly a foot long, that which was a centipede to the eye on one side, a super-prawn on the other, yet when cooked was sweeter than any lobster, and the most luscious and bizarre eating known to man. On Sunday we went to the Protestant church. Before the native pastor ascended the pulpit, he shook hands with the chief and his foreign visitor, nor did he forget to mention me in his prayers. He had a good face and manner; but what with the inattention, the talking, and the sleeping, the babies crying, and their mothers carrying them out, the kingdom of heaven did not advance appreciably. The congregation wore their finery. The women, reputed for their looks, wore European dresses, straw hats, and their black hair hung in two long plaits down the back; they seemed coarse and fat, their bare feet and ankles the most ungainly I had ever seen. But men and women were kindly and welcoming.

That evening, along the coast, some two hundred people assembled for singing—the Tahitian's great social pleasure. They sang in chorus, with zest, a female soloist ever and anon striking some notes in a strained *alto*, the rest keeping up a repetitive—rhythmic, and in fine harmony. They were to sing all night. They asked me if I would sing them an English hymn. I did not remember any, but I sang "Reuben! Reuben!" and pleased them very much. At eleven o'clock, after three hours of it, I prepared to

depart. Outside the singing booth, some young men were dancing the lascivious and prohibited *hula-hula*, to an appreciating audience, and one saw that amongst all the younger people who crowded round sexual excitement was rampant. Suddenly an old man rushed from the singer's booth, reproving the dancers with a flow of words, scattering the young folk who watched them, casting a chill upon the amorous air. His breast was swelling with moral zeal; yet, did this remote islander but know it, his zeal was jealousy. I said an *old* man, for whether it be in Tahiti or Twickenham, it is always the elderly and worn-out males who are the denouncers of sexuality, always the young and lusty who are the denounced. The old men think it is reformation—the Holy Ghost working in them; their letters to the *Times* picture a hideous underworld of sex. But let them search their hearts! You will find, nine times in ten, that in youth these elderly males were as other men, and gave their passions rein. And if they only knew it, there is no need for fear; *Anno Domini* will reform the other fellow, even as it reformed them. I am not approving loose morals. Far from it. Wantonness, promiscuity, is ever nasty; but the sexual instinct, the strongest given to man, is not for the diatribes of the old and the puling.

Among women, it is the sexually unsatisfied, a great army, who most fiercely denounce an erring sister. This, too, is jealousy; yet one feels a profound pity for those millions of women who, because of convention, or the selfishness of parents, or more than all, our economic system, are denied their instincts toward love and motherhood. Economics, did we but realise it, dog the woman at each step; note, for example, how they colour the whole question of the illegitimate. When the erring daughter returns home, it is her father's instinct to take her to his

bosom; but when she goes out into the snow, and leads in the cause of all the trouble, in his velveteen suit and fauntleroy collar—it is then the father sees red. Another to be fed and clothed and sent to school! Another hundred a year gone up the chimney! It is then, and only then, simulating an outraged morality, that he rends his daughter with a solemn curse.

With their emancipation, and the passing of creeds and dogmas, women will shake off many of their sexual trammels. As the priest steps out of the door, the lover will often come in by the window; in other words, an increasing number of women will decide that this present life is the time for living and loving. Collectively, women will never give way to vulgar licence; nature, guarantor for the next generation, will see to that. Nor will the deep instinct for motherhood ever wither. Our system of marriage will no doubt continue; but the day is coming when we shall say that a love-child, the offspring of healthy, primæval passion, is more legitimate in Nature's eyes than the progeny of half the fashionable unions at St. George's, Hanover Square.

In these days of hypocrisy and prurience, without palliating licence, this must needs be said: there are worse things than healthy sexuality—some worse things sexually, and many worse things ethically. With a vast experience of men and women, I will tell you this: that a mean man is farther from our mother, Nature, than a rake, and a slanderous woman farther than a Magdalen.

Where was I? . . . In Tahiti: as I passed at eight o'clock next morning, the singers and dancers were just dispersing.

A school with seventy scholars, where two native women taught, stood a stone's throw from the chief's. The hours, for so hot a climate, were sensibly short.



Rushing out for their long intervals of play, one saw the boys climb into a *banyan* tree, where hung ripening many bunches of bananas, and upon these, and oranges and mangoes, they gorged unceasingly. Under this *banyan* a man worked, hollowing a canoe from a tree trunk, while a few yards distant a colony of land crabs peered at us from their holes. I held athletic sports, which the school children carried through with a great zest. Other days we played at soldiers, drilling and charging, and a pelting battle with immature cocoanuts. Such intelligent little creatures, both native and half-caste Chinese, I had never seen. One of them made an effective telephone. Another fashioned a motor car in the sand, and with odds and ends imitated its parts, and its noises, with a diabolical cleverness. So we played at telephones and motor cars on the Tahiti beach, and at soldiers, and at motor cars again, for day after day; and when I gave the chief my presents, and departed, the children wove a garland of blossoms, and placed it on my head.

From Tahiti I sailed to Makatea, in the Paumotus group, where a French company was working the phosphates. An island about five miles long was disclosed, with coralline cliffs of limestone, rising up 250 feet; as we drew nearer, one saw upon the steep slope that which looked like the 100-stamp mill of some gold mine.

A few years ago Makatea had been but a valueless speck upon the waters, covered with a low forest, and with cocoanuts. Then one day there landed upon it some nosing individual, chipping here and digging there; as he chipped, deposits of phosphates were revealed, and by analogy, Makatea had become worth something like a million pounds. The analogy was with Christmas Island, south of Java, which greatly enriched its owner; and with Ocean Island, Nauru, and Auguar, in the Pacific,



which were greatly enriching theirs; these being the principal deposits so far discovered.\*

The phosphate is a transformed limestone, whose origin, most chemists consider, was guano, and it is found lying wedged in masses among the coral rocks, to a depth of twenty feet or more. This is blasted out, crushed, dried, and sold f.o.b. at a handsome profit; so handsome, that a small island, carrying a few million tons of it, becomes a potential asset of the first magnitude. The raw material is finally treated by sulphuric acid; becoming thus a super-phosphate, in world-wide demand as a fertilizer.

We drew in close to the island, and anchored to a buoy, the depth of water here, a stone's throw from the shore, being 240 fathoms. The great plant upon the cliff-side was worked by Japanese, and the crushed phosphate carried out to waiting vessels by a fleet of lighters.

A small number of natives live upon Makatea. I encountered one of these, who carried home for his dinner two cocoanut crabs. These crabs climb the cocoanut trees; with their powerful claws they cut off the nuts, which are broken open in their fall, and having thus prepared a meal, descend with deliberation to eat it. Their flesh becomes extremely rich and oily, but is relished by the natives.

Far to the West, in this South Pacific, lies Norfolk Island, six miles long, discovered by Captain Cook—an idyllic spot in a mellow clime. Early in the eighteenth hundreds this island was turned by Britain into a convict settlement. The convicts, degraded to the level of beasts, were treated as beasts; men went to their daily toil yoked

\* Ocean Island, in the Gilbert group, just South of the Equator, is officially stated to have 1500 acres of phosphates. In the year 1913, 203,000 tons were sold, for about 30/- a ton. Nauru, or Pleasant Island, 150 miles distant, has been officially estimated to carry 41,000,000 tons of phosphates.

together like bullocks. The warders, even the officers over them, were often viler, more innately brutal than the convicts; it is indeed certain that they goaded many a man to suicide, and many a man to murder, so that he should escape from this earthly hell by hanging.

In course of time alleviations came. Certain of the convicts, earning ticket-of-leave, were enabled to take up land on the island, marry, and lead human lives. In the fifties, it was decided to remove the establishment to Tasmania. Thither the convicts were transferred to prisons, and the good-conduct men, with their families, to a beautiful spot on the North bank of the Derwent River, which they named New Norfolk. In the Bush Inn at New Norfolk, a few years later, the opera *Maritana*, with its melody, "Scenes that are brightest," was composed.

In 1856, as the last of the convicts left Norfolk Island, there arrived a strange community, numbering 194 persons. These were the descendants of those sailors of H.M.S. "Bounty" who mutinied in 1789, and sailed away with Tahiti women to live on Pitcairn Island. Pitcairn, only a mile long, was now become too small, and its community, petitioning Queen Victoria for a larger island, had been brought to Norfolk. Thirty families arrived. Those who composed them were cousins many times over, and bore among them just eight surnames: Christian, Quintall, McCoy, Adams and Young were the names of mutineers; Evans, Buffett and Nobbs sprang from three men who had reached Pitcairn at a later date. Each family was allotted fifty acres, together with live stock; and what with the land, the fruit growing wild, and a sea swarming with fish, was assured of plenty. Most of the 194 settled down on Norfolk. But there had been some who bitterly resented leaving Pitcairn, and these, to the number of forty, returned there after several years, where their descendants still live.

A little steamer, sailing out of Sydney, calls in at Norfolk Island once in five weeks. There is no harbour; the red cliffs, at whose feet the waves break heavily, whose summits are crowned with pine trees, do not indicate even a landing place. But as you round the South of the island, you see it—a beach, and a grassy expanse, half-covered with the old buildings of the convict establishment. A whale boat, rowed by the islanders, took me ashore. There was a bar, and a heavy surf breaking; I landed behind the breakwater which the convicts had built.

Some sixty years had passed since the Pitcairn Islanders came to Norfolk. The grandchildren of the "Bounty" men were now the great-great-grandchildren; the community was grown to 650 souls. A station of the Pacific Cable was now located on the island, also the headquarters of the Melanesian Mission.

It was mail day—the monthly event. A short distance from the breakwater, behind the ruins of the convict prison, stood the old officers' quarters, turned into a Post Office, and here the island was congregating. There were bare-footed children, who had walked, but the grown people came riding down, or drove a shaggy horse in a sulky. The uncouthly moving men, some of them bare-foot, the women in garish, old-fashioned finery and sun-bonnets, the shaggy tethered horses cropping the grass, the quaint vehicles, the stately old building, and the hills behind with the pine trees, might have been a Virginia Court-house scene in the years round about 1650.

In-breeding has brought some evil effects to the community; but to a casual glance they seemed well set up, not bad looking, nor did the blood of the Tahiti women, which flows in all their veins, show otherwise, except in a few faces, than in a rather elegant swarthinness. A bare-

footed, unkempt, yet sturdy man, seventy years old, volunteered to drive me over the island.

He said: "I'm an Evans—not a Bounty man, but my wife was a Quintall. Her great-grandmother told her about the mutiny. Mr. Christian—that was the officer—was driven so miserable by Bligh, that he was near committing suicide. Just then, as he paced the deck, he heard a voice saying 'Take the ship!' He looked round, but could see no one. A few minutes later he again heard the voice whispering 'Take the ship!' and he saw Quintall leaning out of the fo'c'sle. And that's how the mutiny began."

We had driven up the hill, to the main level of the island, and entered an avenue of *araucaria* pines, of which there are groves all over Norfolk. Presently we came to the Melanesian Mission. Here a hundred youths, from the Solomon and the Banks groups, are trained as native teachers, and return to their islands to spread the gospel.

The pride of the Mission is a memorial chapel to Bishop Patteson; in its way a gem. The windows are stained glass, the wood-work of the pews inlaid with mother-of-pearl, the floor of marble; there is a reredos which came all the way from Torquay, and a brass tablet to Bishop Selwyn, the Mission's founder. Before the place of each Solomon Islander lay a daintily bound prayer-book and hymnal, in the *Motu* tongue.

As my barefoot host drove me to his own cottage, we passed numerous homesteads. Here lived a Christian, here a McCoy, and over there, under the pines, a Buffett. Close to three houses of the Adams family, stood the island school; the children rode to it each day, tethering their horses in a nearby meadow. The houses were simple cottages of wood, standing beneath old trees, flowers in the gardens, and oleanders in bloom. In their meadows, horses and cattle grazed, poultry scratched, and I saw

fine broods of turkeys. Lemons, oranges and guavas seemed to grow wild. Flocks of blue pigeons flew up from the streams, and a few brilliant parrots. Each vista was rounded off by the pine trees, and through them sometimes lay a glint of the sea.

My host had arrived at Norfolk as a boy, and was one of the few remaining Pitcairn-born. He took me to see another of these—a very old woman—who set before me tea and bread and butter in the courtliest way imaginable. Then we went to the cemetery. At its far end were the brown old headstones of the convict days, now hardly legible—of officers, soldiers, warders, and their wives, the greater part Irish, who had died, or been drowned, or been murdered by some despairing convict, so that he might get hanged. The convicts themselves lay outside the fence—outside holy ground—a mound between the seashore and the turf denoting where their bodies had been dumped. The nearer half of the cemetery held the graves of the Pitcairn people, their headstones of white marble coming all the way from New Zealand; and one saw, again and again, the eight surnames set out, followed by some promissory text from the Scriptures.\* Old pines stood on the slopes above, and the waters of the Pacific were lapping a stone's throw away; in these two acres of burial ground is unrolled all the history of Norfolk Island.

When the French Government sent no more convicts to New Caledonia, and it was realised that the mineral

\* This, for example:—

Sacred to the Memory of  
Charles Driver Christian  
Choirmaster  
at Pitcairn and here  
Who departed this life  
October 22nd, 1906  
Aged 77

"He hath put a new song in my mouth."



wealth of this considerable island had largely been signed away to capitalists who were not prepared to work it, many of the French who had gone out and settled there moved away. Certain of them passed on to the New Hebrides, the nearest group of islands to the East, where they found a number of their countrymen, together with a certain number of British, but no flag. But the blessed word "Condominium" was on every lip, and presently the islands appeared under the joint government of France and England; with one Court of Law, but with two of everything else like a *trousseau*—two flags, two Residents, two staffs, two sets of stamps, two religions, and two methods of earning the liking or hate of the aborigines. Some six hundred French, and three hundred British—officials, planters, traders, and missionaries—came under the Condominium, as from November 15, 1910.

When at a certain dawn, I found myself anchored in the harbour of Vila my ignorance of this group burst upon me. The New Hebrides! What did I know of them? Only that Presbyterian missions were established there, and that the Rev. Dr. Paton had wrestled with the heathen on Tanna. I looked that island up on the Admiralty chart. This other, where I was anchored, was Efate, and this settlement of Vila the capital of the group. We were in the tropics. The wooded hills which rose about the harbour were densely green, exquisite in the sunrise; this might have been an island in the Caribbean Sea.

The small settlement lay facing us—some fifty houses along the beach and on the hills behind. One of these was the house of the French Resident, another the Condominium Court, another the joint Post Office. Two small islands rose in the bay. Upon one stood the British Residency, where our flag was presently hoisted, and the

British Hospital. On the other stood the prim buildings of a Presbyterian mission. A dozen island schooners, lying up for the hurricane season, rode at anchor. There are half a dozen traders' stores, French and British in Vila. Little spasms of trading take place before and after the heat of the day, but in the hot hours there is not a customer to be seen. The natives are asleep. The French go to their breakfast soon after eleven. Early in the afternoon French matrons sit by their doors seeking a breeze; they are in island *négligée*, and plainly have put on flesh. The offices close early. As the British Residency on the little island, there will probably be lawn-tennis after four o'clock. The Condominium Court sits twice a week. At nine in the morning, on a cry from the bailiff, the French and British Judges enter, and seat themselves. Between them sits the President, a neutral, who at the time of my visit was a Dutch jurist. They are conventionally garbed. Important trials have been held here, and native murderers have heard the death sentence read out in French and English; but on this day nothing more heinous presented itself than some strayed horses. The bailiff of the court, a Frenchman, called loudly the names of several natives, who stepped forward, admitted the soft impeachment, and were sentenced, in the two tongues, to be fined Fr. 1 each, with costs. Still another horse had been straying, and this time the bailiff himself stepped to the well of the Court. A broad smile sat upon the President's face as he passed sentence.

This island may be twenty miles across, but the interior, as with the rest of the group, is not opened up. There is nothing like a metalled road, and the tracks which lead from the settlement end at some nearby coconut plantation. Coconuts are the staple of the New Hebrides, copra the chief export. These islands are mountainous, overlain with forests; the volcanoes on Am-

brym, Lopevi, and Tanna are still seen to smoke. About thirty of the islands are inhabited. The most populous is Malekula, with fifteen thousand natives; but as in so many parts of the Pacific, they are fast dying out. A trader on one of these had occasion to verify the signatures to a transfer of land. Twelve men had signed the deed, eight years before; but when he went to their village, he told me, all of them were dead. They die from consumption, malaria, the white man's drink, the white man's syphilis, and such epidemics as measles; but in the main these races are dying because they have not the will to live. Each island has its different tribe, each tribe its language. On Malekula live the most confirmed cannibals—now that the Fijians have become Methodists—in the South Seas.

The largest island of the New Hebrides is Santo, seventy miles by forty. On its east coast lie French plantations, yet its mountainous interior remains an unexplored forest, the haunt of cannibals. At its mouth end, little more than a stone's throw from the mainland, is the island of Tangoa, a mile long, and the site, for many years past, of a Presbyterian mission. Here native teachers are trained. In return for their keep, they have given their labour, so that the slopes of Tangoa have turned from jungle to a grassy park, where milch cows are grazing, and upon the crest, in a garden, stands the well-built house of the missionary, with fowls and turkeys about it, and a cooing of pigeons in the trees.

I entered it, and so passed to my own country, North of the Tweed. So Scottish, nay, so primly Presbyterian an atmosphere, on a small tropical island hard over against the cannibal forests, lay beyond the bounds of fancy—yet here it was! The missionary and his wife were Aberdeen. They had been here twenty years, yet there was no mistaking the real Mackay. It exuded with

every uttered word, as did a great kindliness. Moreover, it was the afternoon of the Sabbath; no work was being done; speech and gesture were strictly modified. Other missionaries and their wives were present; I closed my eyes, and thought it was the General Assembly; this prim room was furnished to the taste of a Moderator; the prints upon the walls were decorous, Presbyterian prints; the first volume on the shelf to catch my eye was "The Life of Principal Rainy." We talked of missions, and the recent eating of a white man, and of missions again, until the dark, sitting down to a Scotch tea, with boiled eggs to our tea, and gingerbread. Afterwards a bell tolled, and we walked a hundred yards to the mission hall, for the evening service. A matter of seventy natives, the men who were being trained, sat on the benches, and a dozen of their women, with infants at the breast, sat at the side, apart. After an opening prayer by the missionary, the natives took over the service. Hymns were given out; they were sung at a high pitch, with a straining of voices. A native, rising in his place, read the verses about the rich man and Lazarus, and attempted, in passable English, to preach therefrom.

I did not follow him. I was thinking of all I had seen that day—the idyllic beauty of this small island, the blue strip of water separating it from the mainland, the mountains of Santo, with their forests and cannibals, and the fantastic illusion of being back in Scotland. I thought of this mission—of all the missions I had seen in the South Seas. What a welter of creeds! What a passing, from island to island, of bearded men and spectacled women—good and determined people, as like as not, enduring much hardship! It seemed to me that their efforts approached completion, that the South Seas neared the saturation point; they would soon hold all the religion they could carry. Some day, I thought, when the coloured



racés of the world are full of Christianity, these same coloured ones will join together, and undertake the greatest foreign mission of all times. This will be a mission to—ENGLAND; a mission to cleanse her slums, to improve the surroundings of the poor; a mission to take drink by the throat, and strangle it as a vested interest; a mission to the rich and the caste-bound, so that the scales shall fall from their eyes; a mission to the churches, that they shall cease their wrangling, their oriental genuflexions, their turning of the white of the eye upward, and shall strive to make this known world a fitter place. I could already see, in my mind's eye, the great opening festival; and in my ears was the shout of the immense coloured chorus:

“They call us to deliver  
Their land from error's chain.”

The Sunday night's service was ending. While the seventy raucous voices sang “Abide with me,” my thoughts returned to the mission room, and a sadness fell upon me. In a hundred years, very likely in far less, these races would have ceased to exist, and the islands which now knew them, would know them no more. The missionaries did what they were able. They brought a glimmering to primitive brains. They combatted the traffic in liquor. But they could do nought against the immutable decree of nature. In a hundred years these islands would be oriental—Indian, or Chinese, or probably Japanese. Most of the forests would be gone, and thousands of Japanese and Chinese coolies would extract from the soil a great fertility. The face of Santo would be changed. These comfortable Presbyterian days on Tangoa gone beyond recollection. Where the bell had called the mission to prayers, a brazen gong would sound, a smell of incense rise up, a yellow-robed priest enter a



Buddhist temple, and all things proclaim a new heaven and a new earth.

The book is finished, and I lay down my pen; but with no exulting. I have done what I set out as a boy to do, seen everything, travelled nearly a million miles—and lost my way. I have seen the Whole World, and have no notion what it all means.

Two things I grasp. The one is the beauty and glamour of the World; if I could live in that glamour, life would be what it is sometimes in dreams. The other is the horror—the crazy, unmeaning horror—of the same World; like the beauty and glamour, it is part of the very scheme of things.

In men, too, as in Nature, these opposites—the good and the evil—are ever there, the one always balancing the other; the deeper I reason, the deeper I find the balancing to lie.

That is the only meaning I can read into things. If it is the beginning of interpretation, it is yet so vague, so obfuscating, that I can only say "I have lost my way." We have all done so, did men but know it. Our life-journey leads but into a dense fog; let us, therefore, when we meet each other for a moment in the mist, pass the time of day with kind words and a smile.

THE END











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